

Chapter 1: Visitors and Stories

"Hello?" A female voice called out as she stepped into the house. She was wearing a red off-the-shoulder top with a long light brown skirt. She had on mid-thigh high-heeled dark brown boots that laced up the front and carried a light brown jacket over one arm while the other hand held onto a small bag. Her brown hair was brushed back and hung down past her shoulders.

She looked around the hallway when no answer was forthcoming. Her brown eyes took in a small house elf making her way toward her and she smiled a greeting. "Hi Dee-Di." The elf smiled.

"Morning, Miss Granger," Dee-Di greeted. "Miss Black is in the training room, but I'm afraid she is a bit angry today. Mr Black is in the study reading, and Mr Potter is in the swimming pool."

"Thank you," Hermione told her as she moved over towards the kitchen. She placed her jacket over a chair and her bag on the table before moving over to the back door. She opened it and started to head towards the building across from the house.

When she arrived, she opened the door and stepped in to see Harry swimming in the pool. She couldn't help the smile that lit up her face as she silently watched Harry swim for a minute before announcing her presence.

Harry was using powerful strokes as he pushed himself through the water. Sirius had told them all to get used to swimming because one never knew when it would be a necessary skill to have. He also thought it was important to be able to swim in rougher weather, though Harry didn't seem to be practicing that right now.

The pool was magical and could be set to increase the turbulence of the water to mimic waves in the ocean or even be set to dull, murky water similar to what could be found in a swamp. As no one knew where Voldemort's lair was hidden, there was a chance it could be anywhere in the world.

Harry's head came out of the water and smiled when he saw Hermione standing near the edge of the pool.

"Hey, when did you arrive?" he asked as he swam closer to the edge.

"Just a few minutes ago - Dee Di told me that you were out here. She also said that Mia is in a bad mood and that Sirius is busy," Hermione explained. Harry nodded as he planted his hands on the tiles and lifted himself out of the pool. He stood up in his green swim shorts which also let Hermione see just how hard he had been training over the summer. She grabbed a towel off one of the loungers and handed it to Harry, who took it with a smile.

"How has your summer been so far?" Harry asked as he dried himself off. Hermione just smiled.

"It's been fine. Did Draco come by this summer?" Hermione asked. Harry shook his head before he rubbed the side of his hair.

"Nope... turns out that Lucius is up to something this summer – he's been keeping a close eye on Aunt Narcissa and an even closer eye on Draco," Harry explained as he wrapped the towel around his waist. He slipped an arm around Hermione's waist and led her back to the house.

"Does Lupin know about Draco yet?" Hermione asked and Harry nodded.

"Yeah, Uncle Sirius filled him in about Draco's double act. He said that it explained some of Draco's actions over the year he was teaching," Harry explained. Hermione nodded in understanding.

"So, what's up with Mia?" Hermione asked. Harry sighed as he opened the backdoor and motioning for Hermione to step through first. He stepped in behind her, closing the door behind him.

"We're heading up to the Weasley's house this afternoon," Harry admitted. Hermione spun around and faced him in a shock.

"What?" Hermione demanded. "But I thought we were going to meet them at the Quidditch Pitch tomorrow?" Harry nodded.

"I know but Mrs. Weasley was insistent – she wants us there so we can all go together tomorrow," Harry explained. Hermione pouted.

“But she’ll get us up at like 5 in the morning to get ready – if we stay here; all we need to do is grab a portkey and arrive there just before the game starts! And we don’t need to get up at five in the morning,” Hermione argued and Harry shrugged.

“Sorry,” Harry told her. He knew that Hermione didn’t want to go to the Weasley’s house either after the way Molly had treated them at the station. Harry also didn’t want to go, but Sirius had been hard-pressed.

“Maybe, if we’re lucky, after today – we won’t have to be in the same area as Molly,” Harry soothed her but Hermione just shot him a disgruntled look, obviously not very reassured. “I’m gonna go and get dressed. Wait here... everyone will be down soon anyway.”

Hermione watched as Harry left the kitchen and tilted her head to watch Harry’s butt through the doorway before rolling her eyes and shaking her head at the plans for the night. She turned away once Harry was no longer visible and a slight blush appeared on her cheeks.

A footstep sounded on the stairs before the figure responsible made its way into the kitchen. Hermione turned to see Mia carrying a bag.

“Hey,” Hermione greeted and Mia shot her a half smile. “Harry told me about going up to the Weasley’s house.” Mia’s smile disappeared as a scowl took its place.

“It’s only because Mrs. Weasley wants her precious daughter to be with the Boy Who Lives – I just wished Dad had let me deal with the bitch. I would have told her that we wouldn’t be going up no matter what she said,” Mia told Hermione.

“We have to be nice,” Sirius told his daughter as he stepped into the kitchen. He was carrying a bag too. He smiled at Hermione in greeting before looking at his sulking daughter. “I know you don’t like...”

“Hate,” Mia interrupted. “All she wants is a perfect Weasley family where Hermione is the little housewife chasing after Ron and Harry is

the perfect husband to Ginny. Without giving a damn about what the rest of us want.”

“Mia,” Sirius told her but Mia shrugged.

“Sorry dad – you can try all you want but she will grate on my nerves until she dies – she wants everything to go her way or not all and I’m sorry if I don’t feel like bowing down to her just to keep her happy – it’s not in my nature,” Mia informed her father with a stern expression.

Sirius couldn’t help but smile at that.

“I know,” he told her.

“Why do we have to go there anyway?” Hermione jumped in. “We could just tell them that we had an emergency and couldn’t go up and then meet them tomorrow at the stadium like we planned – she’ll get us up at five just to get there!” Sirius looked at her, shocked.

“Not you too!” Sirius moaned but Hermione shrugged.

“I’m sorry but I don’t really like Mrs. Weasley either. I have a mother and I don’t need another one,” Hermione informed the elder man, sourly.

“Very impressive, aren’t they?” another male voice spoke and they turned to see Remus making his way into the kitchen. He was also holding a bag, which he placed on the table. “You should have just told Molly that you couldn’t come.”

“I did but the blasted woman wouldn’t listen – everything I did fell on deaf ears and I wasn’t in the mood just to sit there at the fireplace all night. She was insistent that she make up for last year somehow...” Sirius told him before he turned to the two females. “But I can tell you this. After tomorrow, we won’t have to deal with her for a while.”

This seemed to placate each woman for the time being. Running footsteps were heard and they turned to see Harry now dressed in black jeans and a dark blue t-shirt and trainers. He was carrying a bag too as he made his way into the kitchen.

“Are we all ready?” Harry asked and got muttered ‘yes’ from the girls and nods from the two males.

“Okay, grab your bags and let’s head out to the car,” Sirius told them. They nodded and followed him out to the car. Rex was staying at a neighbour tonight so he wouldn’t be left alone in the house. The owls were out in the overly so they had easy access to get in and out when they wanted to hunt.

Once everyone had packed their stuff into the boot of the car, the kids got into the back seat while Sirius took the seat behind the wheel and Remus got into the passenger seat. Sirius started the car once all the doors were closed and everyone had buckled in.

After a long ride Sirius pulled up near a slapdash building and announced, “Here we are.” Everyone looked at the Burrow and found that it was a tall building that was tipping towards one side. It obviously was still stable only because of magic. “Home for the night.” Everyone got out of the car and rounded the boot to grab their stuff.

“Great,” Harry muttered as he picked up his bag. He reached out and took Hermione’s hand into his before they made their way over to the Burrow’s door, where it was flung open by the enthused Molly Weasley.

Mia had to grit her teeth together to smile politely as she moved closer to the woman. Inside she was itching to plant her fist into the ignorant woman’s face.

Sirius and Lupin took up the rear of the group.

Once they came to stop in front of Molly, she bustled them into her house, closing the door behind them. She moved around to the front of the group and spread her arms open wide to the house in front of them.

“Welcome to our humble home,” Molly greeted happily to Harry and frowned when she saw that Harry and Hermione were holding hands. “Is that appropriate?” she uttered sourly as she glanced pointly toward their linked hands.

Harry and Hermione looked down only to smile as they looked each other before looking at Molly.

“Sorry, instincts,” Harry told Molly as he gently untangled his hand from Hermione only to sling his arm over her shoulder, holding her close. “We tend to do that when we’re in close proximity of each other.”

Mia snickered behind her hand but straightened up when Molly glanced her way. Mia slipped her own hands into her back pockets before looking around.

“Interesting home,” Mia remarked.

“I’m sure it’s not as fancy as yours,” Molly informed the young girl and Mia smiled sweetly.

“Our house isn’t fancy,” Mia told her before shrugging. “It’s entertaining.”

“Mia,” Sirius warned but Mia just smiled sweetly up at her father before turning around to face Molly.

“I’m sure your home will suit our needs fine but I’m not sharing a room with Ginny – there’s only one female I trust and that’s Hermione,” Mia informed Molly. Molly felt her face tightened.

“I’m sorry but there’s not enough room,” Molly informed Mia. “But I’m sure that if you and Ginny were to get to know each other, you will learn in time to trust her.” Ginny smiled at Mia only for it to fade when Mia smirked.

“Good thing I brought my tent – Hermione and I will share that. I’m sure it’ll be comfortable. Besides – we’ll have to get used to tents anyway,” Mia informed the elder woman before turning around to face Ron. “Hey, wanna help me set it up?” Ron couldn’t help but smile at the black haired female.

“Sure – this way we’ll know what we’re doing when we go out tomorrow,” Ron told her as they both headed out of the back door.

Sirius looked over at Remus, who just shook his head.

"She's your daughter," Remus reminded Sirius, who just sighed while raising his eyes heavenward.

"Don't I know it," Sirius muttered. Harry and Hermione shared a look of amusement as they both walked into the kitchen where the twins and two other males were sitting at the table.

"Harry, Hermione!" Fred greeted as he and George smiled.

"Hey guys," Hermione greeted as the two of them moved closer to the table.

"This is Bill," George pointed to the tall male. He had long red hair that was tied back in a ponytail. "And this is Charlie," he pointed to the other man who had shorter, but still red, hair.

"It's nice to meet you," Bill greeted as he shook their hands.

"It's nice to meet you too," Harry greeted back while Fred winced.

"Sorry about mum – we tried to tell her that we had already planned for you guys to meet us at the park but she was insistent. She wanted you to come up here," Fred explained. Bill arched an eyebrow to his brother before looking in puzzlement between the visitors and the twins.

"Okay, what's going on? Ron has been avoiding mum while Ginny has been clinging on to her. Even Percy has been quieter than usual," Bill informed them. George sighed.

"Ginny is interested in Harry but Harry has made it clear that he's not interested in her. Neither Ginny nor mum have been getting the hint," George told them.

"When we met up with the parents after getting off the Express, mum told us that Hermione and Ron were going to get together and that Harry and Ginny were going to get together. She also said that Mia needed to tone her attitude down or she would never get a boyfriend," Fred finished.

Charlie whistled when the twins finished their tale. Just looking at Harry and Hermione showed him how close they were.

“Now you know why Bill and I moved out of the country,” Charlie teased them and Harry grinned.

“Yeah – it’s just, look, I’m sure that your mum is a nice woman, but she keeps trying to mother me. I have a mother, even if she’s dead, and I don’t need anyone trying to take her place. And I’m sure Ginny’s a nice person, but she’s not the right person for me,” Harry told the elder Weasley sibling before looking at Hermione - a look she missed.

Bill and Charlie shared a look with each other when they saw how Harry had looked at Hermione before giving each other subtle nods.

“Don’t worry about it – we know our mum can be overbearing. You should also watch out for Ginny... she keeps talking about you non-stop. We even believed that you two were beginning to date,” Bill explained to Harry and watched as Harry’s features tightened slightly.

“I already have enough on my plate. I just hope that Ginny will be able to move on to someone else sooner or later,” Harry told them and they nodded as the twins stood up.

“Okay, you guys can help us bring the table out – we’re having dinner in the garden because the kitchen isn’t big enough for all of us to eat in here,” Fred told them. The rest of them also rose and started to help the twins take the table out into the garden.

Once out back they saw Ron and Mia arguing over how the tent should be put together. Mia was holding the instructions and pointing to something but Ron was shaking his head and was holding a long metal rod.

From what they could gather, Ron was insisting that he was right about the metal rod while Mia was arguing that the instructions were right. Hermione couldn’t help but shake her head at boys’ inability to use instructions or maps – Sirius had gotten them lost twice on the way here because he had refused to use a map.

Soon the table was set up. Mia had finally won the argument with Ron and the tent was nearing completion. After Molly placed the last bowl of food on the table she called for everyone's attention.

"Dinner time!" Molly announced and everyone scrambled back into the garden to sit down.

Harry and Hermione sat down next to each other and Mia took the other seat next to Harry. Ron sat on Hermione's other side, so Ginny was forced to sit on the other side of the table with her parents and Percy. The others all sat at the ends of the table since the middle seats were all taken.

"So, how has your summer been so far?" Arthur asked the kids while passing the bowl of mashed potatoes around.

"It's been fine," Harry told him as he passed the meat over to Hermione. "Mia has been causing trouble as usual" he teased Mia, who rolled her eyes at her brother and Arthur couldn't help but smile.

"Ah... Callie was the same but it made life more fun, didn't it?" Arthur asked as he looked towards Sirius, who just smirked at that statement.

"Callie was always a bit of a trouble maker, wasn't she?" Molly cut in, causing everyone to look at her. "I mean, she always seemed to be wrecking havoc and stepping on people's toes – I'm surprised you even fell for her Sirius."

Sirius felt his hand tighten around his fork as he glared at the elder woman.

"Callie was a sweet and smart girl! I fell for her because she spoke her mind and didn't care what people thought of her," Sirius informed Molly with a hard tone to his voice. Molly shook her head.

"Mia shouldn't have to be the same way her mother was. Not every man is like you... she might be hard pressed to find a man who will like her for who she is. She just needs to tone herself down a little bit," Molly told them all in a motherly tone when Mia got fed up.

"I need a walk," Mia informed them as she dropped her fork with a clatter and stood up from the table. Molly spoke up as she left.

"See, this is what you do all the time. You run away when things get bumpy, that isn't a good sign," Molly informed the young girl. Mia turned around and looked at her.

"Actually, I'm walking away so I don't grab that knife and stick it in the stone of what you call a heart," Mia informed her before walking away. Hermione stared after her best friend with a sad face before she looked at Harry, who nodded and stood up. He held out his hand and Hermione placed her hand into it before standing.

"Hermione and I are going for walk, too" Harry told them.

"Shouldn't Hermione check on Mia?" Ginny asked. "I can go on a walk with you."

"No!" Harry shouted, startling everyone before he rubbed his forehead. "I want you both to listen to me and listen to me carefully." Molly and Ginny looked at him. "I don't fancy Ginny." Ginny's jaw dropped from shock. "Just because I look like my father doesn't mean that I have the same tastes as him. So, if you excuse me, Hermione and I need to have a talk to figure out where we are in our relationship and I'd appreciate it if you two kept your big fat noses out of *my* life." With that, he walked off, pulling Hermione after him.

"Are you going after Mia?" Lupin asked as he looked at Ron. Ron looked up before glancing towards the hill where Mia had headed behind before turning back Lupin.

"I really don't want to be struck by lightning," Ron told him and Sirius smiled slightly.

"The man is smart," Sirius told Lupin, who rolled his eyes.

"I'll go after her then," Lupin told him and Sirius nodded before he looked at Ron.

"Come on, I'll give you a game of chess. Harry is always telling me how you beat him every time," Sirius told him and Ron grinned as he

grabbed his plate and filled it up with more food before leading the way into the house.

Lupin looked at Molly before shaking his head and spoke to Arthur.

“Arthur, I think Sirius and I will be setting up our tent out here as well tonight as well,” Lupin told him and Arthur waved his hand.

“No problem,” Arthur told him as Lupin got up from his seat and went to find Mia.

Arthur turned to his wife before shaking his head. “I have never been so humiliated before,” Arthur started. Molly opened her mouth to say something but Arthur cut her off. “Harry is not your son. Mia is not your daughter, and you have no right to dismiss Callie in front of her husband or her daughter. Callie gave her life to protect the Potters and Mia – that’s more than any of us have ever done.” With that, Arthur stood up with Bill, Charlie and the twins and they moved into the house, leaving Molly and Ginny alone to think about what had happened.

Mia was sitting at the bank of the river throwing stones in every now and then when she felt someone sit down next to her.

“I hate her,” Mia admitted as she turned her head to face Lupin. “I hate Molly so much that it scares me.”

“I know,” Lupin responded with a sad smile as he reached out and wrapped an arm around his niece’s shoulders.

“I just want her to stop putting down my mom in front of me. I never knew her, but hearing what Molly thinks of her just pisses me off!” Mia exclaimed before she hung her head. “And she keeps saying that no boy would be interested in me.” Lupin laughed slightly, causing Mia to look at him.

“Mia, let me tell you that you will have no problem in the boy’s department,” Lupin promised before holding up his hand. “Yes, there will be some problems. Some boys won’t be able to deal with your strength, but you will find someone out there who will love you for you.

Hey, Molly used to say that about your mother and look what happened – your dad fell in love with her!”

Mia couldn't help the small smile appear on her face. Lupin could still see the sadness that lurked behind it in her blue eyes and felt his heart hurt for her. He wanted to go back and rip a new strip off the Weasley woman for doing this to Mia.

“I just don't get why she is so determined that Harry will fall in love with Ginny or why Hermione and Ron will get together? Is she that desperate?” Mia asked. Lupin sighed.

“You never know. It might happen,” Lupin told but Mia shook her head as she looked at Lupin.

“It won't. Harry is getting sick of Ginny. No one knows about this, but he has nightmares of Hermione dying at the hands of Ginny,” Mia admitted. Lupin just stared down at her, shocked. “I hear him, sometimes. He cries in his sleep - whispering Hermione's name while Ginny's name comes out in a rage. I know Harry wants to protect us and keep us from worrying that Ginny is obsessed with him but he can't. I'm scared!”

“Mia...” Lupin started but trailed off, unsure about what to say.

“Am I gonna lose my brother?” she whispered as she turned her gaze to the river, watching it twinkle under the changing light of the sky as dusk started to arrive. “Am I gonna lose my brother to a girl who can't understand that you can't make yourself fall in love? That the heart knows no logic? Am I gonna lose my brother because of a woman can't deal with the fact that her daughter isn't going to be Harry's wife? Will I lose my best friend because she's in love with Harry?”

“No!” Lupin whispered out and Mia turned to face him, tears filming her blue eyes, making her look younger than her years. “You're not gonna lose them. Hermione and Harry will be there and Ginny will learn that she is not in love with Harry and move on.”

Mia lifted a hand and wiped away a lone tear that slipped down her cheeks.

"You promise?" Mia whispered. Lupin just stared down at his niece before he shifted closer, bringing her closer into his body and held her close.

"I'll do my best to make sure that it doesn't happen," Lupin told her and she nodded against his chest. They both looked out toward the river in silence.

Meanwhile, Harry and Hermione were making their way through the woods. They came to the river further up from where Lupin and Mia were. Hermione had worked herself up into a furious state.

"Can I kill her?" Hermione raged as she stormed ahead of Harry before pacing back and forth at the bank of the river. Harry came to a stop just a few steps away from her as he watched.

"It's against the law," Harry reminded her but Hermione just huffed.

"We could say we thought she was a death eater," Hermione informed him and Harry sighed but couldn't help the small smile that flickered on his face. It faded back behind a serious expression as he responded.

"Hermione..." he started but Hermione wasn't listening.

"I mean, what right does she have to suggest that Ron and I are going to get together? Let alone that you and Ginny are going to get together? I mean has the law changed? That a muggleborn should marry a pureblood if she wants to get acceptance in the wizarding world?" Hermione demanded. "And while we're on that topic, where the hell does she get off on saying that Mia is so undesirable that no boy would ever be attracted to her?"

"Hermione!" Harry shouted, catching her attention and she turned to look at him, breathing heavily. Her cheeks flushed from her furious pacing and rage. Harry couldn't help but be turned on by Hermione's anger before he shook his head and mentally collected himself. "We need to talk." Hermione looked at him curiously.

“Okay,” she told him as Harry moved closer to her and sat down on the bank. He patted the spot next to him and Hermione sat down, curious at Harry's change of topic.

Harry just stared out at the river so Hermione waited for him to start the conversation. When it became clear that he wasn't going to say anything for a while she got slightly impatient. “What did you want to talk about?”

Harry turned to face her and bit back the smile at her adorable curious expression.

“About us,” Harry told her and Hermione nodded as she turned to the lake.

“There is no us,” Hermione mumbled. “Not really ever since second year.” Harry sighed as he reached out and took her hand, causing Hermione to turn back towards him.

“We do have a lot to work though before we can start a relationship – we talked about your crush on Lockhart and my attempts to be nice to Ginny – which has gotten me into deep trouble,” Hermione gave him a small smile. “And we talked about you lying about the time turner but I can't help but feel that there's more to talk about.”

“Maybe we're over analysing things,” Hermione suggested. Harry looked at her and Hermione sighed. “We keep talking and talking. When we get closer to something, something else always interrupts us and we put it off. Maybe we just need to stop talking about it and accept it as a stepping stone?”

Harry couldn't help the impressed look that appeared over his face at her thoughts. Hermione noticed this and her expression turned wary. “What?” she asked and Harry smiled.

“You, you're saying that we shouldn't over think everything and that we should just take it in stride? It's like we've switched personalities,” Harry told her and Hermione smiled slightly.

“Yeah, I guess you're right. You are right that we do have things to work through but we should just take it a day at a time. Before we

were always worried that we were going to start something that we were too young for. Maybe we just have to leave it be and when it does happen, it happens,” Hermione suggested.

“All we have to do is be patient,” Harry told her and Hermione nodded. They both linked hands and turned back to the river in front of them, happily enjoying each other's company as they watched the sun set.

When they finally headed back to the Burrow much later they found everyone getting ready for bed. Hermione headed into the tent that she was sharing with Mia. The tent had two rooms but Hermione and Mia had decided to share a room together since each room had two beds.

Both girls had been laying there for a while just staring at the ceiling when a thought came to Mia.

“So...” Mia started and Hermione turned her head to look at her.

“So?” Hermione repeated and Mia turned to face her best friend.

“You and Harry getting closer then?” she asked and Hermione rolled her eyes as she turned her face back up to the ceiling.

“Not that it’ll be easy,” she muttered and Mia sighed. She had heard about the talk between Harry and Hermione when they went back in time and knew that they had more to talk about before they could step further into the relationship.

“Just give it time. You and Harry have had a rough couple of starts and it doesn’t help that Ginny and Mrs. Weasley keep trying to get in between you two,” Mia assured the younger girl.

“Poor Harry. He must be running for his life,” Hermione told Mia with a fond smile on her face and Mia giggled.

“He must be going mad stuck up in the house with Ginny next door to him,” Mia told Hermione, who started laughing at the thought.

“As long as he’s not hiding under the bed out of fear, I’m sure he’ll be fine,” Hermione told her.

In fact Harry wasn't hiding under his bed out of fear. He was rolling his eyes in annoyance as he looked at Ron, desperate for Ginny to get off his bed and out of their room.

"Ginny, I think it's time for you to go to bed," Ron told his sister but got a cold glare in return before she turned back to Harry with a smile.

"I'm so glad that you came up – mum has been frantic ever since you've been found and brought back to the wizarding world," Ginny told Harry.

"No one found me. I arrived here myself," Harry informed her tightly. Ginny just shook her head.

"Well, I'm glad that you arrived in this wonderful world. It's so much better than that muggle world, isn't it?" Ginny asked him.

"Ginny, go to bed," Harry informed her. Ginny just smiled at Harry as she planned her next attack.

"I'm so glad that you realised that Hermione isn't the woman that you were hoping for. She really isn't a suitable as your girlfriend," Ginny told Harry as she placed her hand on his covered thigh only for Harry to grab her hand and shove it away.

"Get out!" Harry snapped, causing Ginny to look at him with a hurt look on his face. "Get the hell out of here and don't even come near me again – Hermione is a hundred times the woman that you are!" Ginny got up and made her way out of the room, closing the door behind her while Harry turned to Ron. "I'm sorry..." Harry stated but Ron waved away the apologies.

"Don't be - she stepped over the mark," Ron told him. Harry nodded as they both slid down in their beds and closed their eyes to get some sleep – they were gonna have to get up early in the next morning.

TBC

Chapter 2: Quidditch Game and Visitors.

"Time to wake up," an irritatingly cheerful voice called through into the dark room. There were groans and grumbles from the male occupants who were still sleeping in the beds.

Sirius came out of the house and into the back garden where he saw Hermione and Mia taking their tent down.

"Hey girls! Have a good sleep?" Sirius asked. Both girls smiled toward Sirius, nodding.

"Yeah, it was nice," Hermione replied.

"Good. Can one of you do me a favour?" he asked and they both looked at him curiously. "Ron and Harry are having a hard time getting up. I was wondering if one of you could help them along?" he asked and Hermione grinned.

"I'll get Harry up," Hermione told Sirius, who nodded and started to help Mia finish packing up the tent.

Hermione made her way up the stairs and over to the boys' room. She was about to open the door when Ginny came out of her bedroom all dressed up. Ginny arched an eyebrow when she saw Hermione and realised whose door Hermione was standing in front of.

"What do you think you are doing?" Ginny hissed. Hermione arched an eyebrow.

"Going to wake Harry and Ron up," Hermione informed her but Ginny shook her head.

"It's okay, I can get them up myself," Ginny told her but Hermione sighed as she rubbed her forehead.

"Look Ginny. Harry isn't interested in you – he made it very clear last night. Would you just leave him alone?" Hermione asked and Ginny laughed bitterly as she crossed her arms.

“What’s the matter? Afraid that he will realise that I’m a better catch for him than you are?” Ginny asked. Hermione rolled her eyes.

“You know, I feel sorry for you,” Hermione informed her. “You are acting like a little girl taking it this far – believing that Harry is actually interested in you and roping your mother into helping you snag Harry. I don’t know who I feel more sorry for – you or Harry.” Ginny arched an eyebrow.

“And how did you come to that conclusion?” Ginny asked. “You listen here. You and I both know that I’m better for Harry – I’m a pureblood; someone who can introduce him properly into this world, and someone who can help him become the true hero he is. You’re nothing but a muggleborn who would rather stick her nose in books than experience real life.” Hermione couldn’t stop her laughter.

“I’m sorry... which one of us has Harry tried to kiss?” Hermione asked. Ginny paled slightly when the almost-kiss between Harry and Hermione flashed back into her mind. “And which one of us spent the night with him?” The flirting between Harry and Hermione, instantiating that they had spent the night together, flashed back in her mind. “Live with it - Harry is interested in me because I see him for who he is. Harry Potter, not the Boy-Who-Lived.” With that, she opened the door, stepped inside and closed it behind her, shutting Ginny out.

“Harry,” a female voice broke through his sleep. Harry groaned as he turned around in his bed only to bump into a female body. Curious, he opened his eyes before he looked into a pair of brown eyes that were so familiar to him.

“Hermione?” He slurred out, sleepily. Hermione couldn’t help the smile that formed on her face at his adorable sleepy look.

“Hey sleepy head, it’s time to wake up,” Hermione told him. Harry groaned as he let out a yawn and rubbed at one eye.

“What’s the time?” he asked.

"After half five," Hermione admitted and Harry's eyes snapped open in shock before he looked at the window and saw that it was barely light outside.

"You're kidding me," Harry muttered before he closed his eyes, snuggling deeper down into his covers. "Wake me up when it's light."

Hermione rolled her eyes in a mixture of amusement and annoyance when an idea hit her and she smiled. Mia had definitely been rubbing off on her. Hermione bent her head down next to Harry's ear.

"Harry, are my nipples pink or brown?" Hermione asked and Harry's snapped his eyes open only to see that Hermione's top was covering her breasts. He pouted in a most satisfactory manner, she thought.

"Don't do that to me," Harry muttered. Hermione grinned.

"Come on, get up before I pour a bucket of water over you," Hermione informed him. She got out of bed leaving Harry alone and frustrated. "Ron!" Hermione called out in a singsong voice. Ron just gave a sleepy grunt back. "Your mum has made a pile a pancakes and syrup all for you."

Ron shot up in bed as he looked around suddenly alert.

"Pancakes?" he asked and Hermione nodded.

"Come and get them while they're hot!" she left the bedroom, leaving behind two frustrated males – one sexually and one hungrily.

"Bitch!" Ron muttered as he flopped back down on his bed.

"Tease," Harry muttered as he pulled the covers back over his head. He jumped when the door slammed opened once more and they saw two buckets full of water heading toward them. Before they could do anything about it, each bucket dumped its contents on its intended target.

"OI!" both males shouted as the chilly water finished waking them up. When they looked up they saw Hermione and Mia standing in the doorway, each holding a bucket.

“Now you can’t go back to bed,” Mia informed them before she and Hermione slapped high fives and ran away, leaving the boys behind soaking wet and annoyed.

Soon, the three adults, Percy, the twins, Ron, Harry and the three girls were on their way to reach the portkey spot that would transport them to their destination. When they had gone a little further down the road they bumped into two men.

“Amos!” Arthur greeted jovially. A taller male with brown hair and brown eyes turned around to see Arthur making his way towards him and he grinned.

“Arthur,” he greeted. Both men shook hands before Amos turned to Sirius and Lupin. “Mr. Black. Mr. Lupin.”

“Mr. Diggory,” both men greeted back, shaking his hand in turn.

“And this is my son, Cedric,” Amos introduced a taller boy with light brown hair and brown eyes. Ginny smirked up at him before looking at Mia, who was smiling at Cedric.

“Hey Cedric,” Mia greeted and Cedric grinned back at Mia.

“Hey Mia. How has your summer been?” Cedric asked. Mia had approached him after the Quidditch match that Harry had fallen in due to the Dementors. Both of them had struck up a friendship that sometimes regressed to flirting.

“Same old, same old – besides, I had no hot guys around here to hang around with,” she teased him and Cedric shot her a mock shocked look.

“A stunning girl like you with no guys hanging over her?” Cedric gasped as he clutched his heart. “The world must be coming to an end.” Mia couldn’t help the laughter that came out at that.

Harry and Hermione shot each other an amused look while Ron just looked between the two of them before eyeing Cedric.

“And what are your intentions towards Mia?” Ron asked as he moved closer to Cedric. Cedric just arched an eyebrow at the young man while Mia giggled.

“Ron, Cedric and I are just friends,” she assured him but Sirius was backing Ron up.

“Really? Sure seem to be friendly with each other,” Sirius told his daughter as he eyed Cedric over. Mia rolled her eyes.

“Thus the term 'friends',” Mia shot back before slapping her father’s arm. “Lay off him.”

“Hey Harry,” Cedric greeted and Harry grinned as he gave a short wave. “Hermione.” Hermione smiled back and Cedric couldn’t help the smile as he watched the two of them together.

“Harry Potter?” Amos asked as he peered around everyone to spot the black haired legend. Harry stepped into his view with Hermione and Amos smiled down at him. “Cedric has told me all about you - especially after the Quidditch Match from when you fell. I guess it just shows which one is the better player.”

Mia became considerably frosty toward the older man from then on.

“How about I kill off your parents with you listening to their screams and then place you on a broomstick with a bunch of Dementors around you and see how well you stay on your broom?” Mia informed him acidly before she pushed past him, walking on.

Cedric sighed at the shocked look on his father’s face.

“Dad, I told you that Harry was attacked by Dementors when he fell from his broom – it wasn’t a case of being a better player,” Cedric informed him before chasing after the black haired girl.

Amos turned around to apologise to Harry only to get cold brown glares in return.

“Come on Harry,” Hermione informed Harry as she tugged on his hand, pulling him away from the man. Harry nodded as he walked after her while Amos turned to face the adults.

“Sorry about that. Harry almost died and if it wasn’t for Mia... Hermione isn’t really over it yet and Mia tends to get annoyed when someone does that to Harry,” Sirius explained his children’s behaviour. “You best stay away from them until they’ve had a chance to cool down a bit.”

“Shall we continue?” Arthur asked and Lupin nodded gratefully.

“Yes, let’s do,” Lupin told him as they all continued walking towards the portkey location.

“Mia!” Cedric huffed out as he chased the girl. She was walking very fast for someone her size. He couldn’t believe a tiny thing like her could cover such a large amount of distance in a few minutes. “Come on, slow down!”

Mia sighed as she slowed down and allowed Cedric to catch up with her, breathing heavily. Mia flicked an eye over him.

“I thought Quidditch players were supposed to be in top condition,” she told him and Cedric laughed.

“Not at the speed you were going,” Cedric informed her and Mia shot him a shy smile.

“Sorry. I get a little frustrated when people get onto Harry like that,” Mia admitted to him.

“And I’m sorry about my dad – he just gets so proud of me that he forgets everything else I said,” Cedric admitted to him and Mia nodded her understanding.

“So, how was your summer?” Mia asked and Cedric shrugged as they carried on walking.

“It’s been fine so far – we went on holiday for a short time,” Cedric told her. “But I’m glad to be back home.”

"Yeah, I guess it's true what they say... 'There's no place like home'," Mia told him and Cedric agreed.

"Yeah," he told her. He lifted up his hand and Mia slipped her own hand into it theatrically. "Let's meet up with the others." They both hurried back to the main path after the others, still holding hands.

When they arrived at the spot they saw that the rest of their group had already arrived. The others all looked at them curiously when they saw Cedric and Mia holding hands. Confused momentarily, Mia and Cedric looked down and separated their hands, each with a slight blush on their faces.

"We have a few minutes before the portkey will be activated – just take a small break," Lupin told them all, taking over for Sirius and Amos. Sirius was currently eyeing Cedric with a wary eye while Amos was eyeing Mia up with a wary eye of his own. Lupin raised his eyes heavenward, hoping that someone would intervene.

Hermione moved closer to Mia, wanting answers to hers and Cedric's actions.

"Well?" Hermione hissed to Mia, who looked at her.

"Well what?" Mia hissed back and Hermione rolled her eyes.

"About you and Cedric!" Hermione shot at her. "Since when have you been flirting with him? And why have you never told me about this?" Mia couldn't help the blush that rose up on her face, causing Hermione's mouth to drop open.

"I talked to him after the whole Dementors/Quidditch thing and we started up a friendship that briefly evolves to flirting every now and then – it's nothing serious," Mia told her and Hermione let out a snort.

"Mia, you were holding his hands when you caught up to us," Hermione informed her and Mia rolled her eyes.

"You and Harry hold hands all the time," Mia retorted. Hermione was about to retort when Sirius called their name. They turned to look at him.

"Come on girls, the portkey is nearly ready," Sirius, told them and they hurried over to the group. Mia stood next to Cedric while Hermione stood next to Harry and they all reached out and grabbed the old boot that was going to transport them to their destination.

Harry felt a tugging sensation at his navel before he found himself swirling around in the air as everyone looked at each other.

Soon, Arthur was shouting at them to let go. The kids let go and felt themselves falling backward towards the ground at high speed while the adults, Percy and Cedric had found a way to slow themselves down so that they could land safely.

Harry fell on his back with Hermione on top of him as they both landed with a thud. Hermione winced when she realised that she was in between Harry's legs and her elbow was lodged in his stomach.

"Oh god, I'm sorry," Hermione apologised as she rolled off him. Harry shook his head.

"Don't worry. You just knocked the air out of me a bit," Harry assured her. Hermione scrambled up to her feet before she reached down and helped Harry up from his spot on the grass.

Mia had also landed on her back with a loud thud. As she shook her head to get rid of the slight dizziness caused by the rough landing a hand came into focus. She looked up and smiled when she saw that it belonged to Cedric. She reached up and allowed him to help her up before adjusting the bag on her back.

"That's what I call a ride," Mia informed everyone as she watched the boys get up from where they had landed along with Ginny.

"Are you kids okay?" Sirius asked in a concerned voice as he moved closer to his daughters and son.

"Yep," Mia assured her father. Harry waved aside concerns over him while trying to calm Hermione down from her panic attack that she had hurt him with her landing.

“Okay then. When Hermione has calmed down a bit, we’ll go to the check-in counter and pay for our spot,” Sirius told them and they nodded.

After they arrived at the checkpoint, Sirius made his way over to the window as he had discussed and paid the man on duty there. When they entered through the gates they saw hundreds of wizards and witches milling about. There were lots of tents all over the place and children were running about with toy wands or zooming about on the children’s brooms that hovered no higher than a foot off the ground. Teenagers seemed to usually have their faces painted with the team colours of their favoured teams and there were loads of stalls throughout the mix selling things.

Making their way through, they soon arrived at the spot that Arthur had reserved for them and the adults went about setting the tents up. Lupin turned to them and handed them a metal jug.

“Could you kids go to the water tap and get us some water for dinner and drinks?” Lupin asked. Harry nodded as he took the jug and all four of them walked off towards the tap.

Hermione and Mia stayed a bit behind from the boys. Hermione leaned into Mia to talk to her quietly.

“For your information, Harry and I don’t always hold hands,” Hermione told her. Mia rolled her eyes. “Are you sure about Cedric?”

“God, Hermione, it’s not like I’m gonna run off and get married to him!” Mia told her. “I’m just having a bit of fun.”

“Are you sure?” Hermione asked, slightly cautious. She knew that Mia had insecurities when it came to guys and she didn’t want to see her best friend hurt. Mia smiled, gently, at her best friend, understanding her line of thought.

“I’m sure,” Mia promised her and Hermione nodded, finally giving in.

They came to a stop with the boys as they waited in line to get to the water tap. The two men in front of them were arguing over the clothing that one man was wearing.

“Men don’t wear dresses – women do,” One of men stated. He was wearing pin-stripped trousers and a white shirt. The other man wore a white shirt and what appeared to be a long skirt.

“But I like a breeze around my privates,” the other man protested. Hermione ducked out of the line giggling while Mia rolled her eyes as the two men faced the group of teenagers.

“There’s a name for that – cross dressers,” Mia informed the old man before she turned back to the gang, shaking her head. “This is a nightmare.”

“Tell me about it,” Harry muttered as Hermione came back to them after the men had disappeared and her giggling fit had calmed down. They got the water before making their way back to the tents where the adults had already finished setting them up, ready to be used.

The kids stepped into one of the tents and found everyone in there, talking.

“Okay, sleeping arrangements. Harry, Ron, Hermione, Mia and Ginny will share this tent. Remus, Sirius and I will share another tent. The rest of the boys will share together. The reason why Harry and Ron are in here with the girls is because there isn’t enough room in the other tents and the girls will probably feel better about having the boys in here with them,” Arthur told them. Both girls nodded.

“Sure, it’s no problem. Harry, Hermione and I are always having a sleepover so we tend to fall asleep in the same room,” Mia assured him and Arthur nodded, satisfied.

“Okay, place your bags into the rooms and you can go and explore about for a little while until the games start,” Sirius told them. All the kids hurried off, placing their stuff into their room before rushing back out to explore the area.

“And we’ll be old men,” Lupin finished, gaining an insulted look from Sirius.

“Speak for yourself old boy; I’m as fit as fiddle!” Sirius exclaimed as he struck a muscle man pose. Lupin rolled his eyes.

“Not mentally, mind you,” he uttered under his breath before placing his stuff into the tent he would be sharing with the other two men.

The twins had gone off in one direction and Ginny had met up with some friends from her year and gone off with them. The four of them had gone off in the other direction to take in the sights and decorations.

“Oh, look!” Mia exclaimed as she grabbed Hermione’s hand and pulled her over to the jewellery stalls. Many kinds of jewellery sparkled in the light. The boys followed them and watched the girls fuss over the trinkets.

Mia and Hermione each ended up purchasing a couple pieces of jewellery before moving over to the clothing stalls. Mia picked out a blood-red gypsy top and handed it to Hermione before raking through the skirt rack and found the blood-red skirt to go with it.

“Go and try them on,” Mia informed her. Hermione arched an eyebrow before allowing herself to be pushed into the changing room where she closed the curtain and changed into the clothes.

Mia continued browsing through the tops on the rack before she found one that she liked. She was raking through the skirts for something to go with it when the curtain rattled, announcing that the changer was coming out. She looked up and smiled when she saw Hermione in her new clothes before elbowing Harry in the stomach.

Harry turned when he felt pain in his side and looked at Mia before seeing Hermione. He felt his jaw drop when he took her in. She was wearing an off the shoulder gypsy top with the bright red colour complimenting her complexion. It stopped just above her midriff. The skirt started at the hips and fell all the way to the floor.

“You look fabulous – you need to get that!” Mia told her. Hermione blushed.

“Really?” she asked and Mia elbowed Harry once more.

“Yes, doesn’t she?” Mia asked her brother only to get mumbles from him and rolled her eyes. “See, you’ve left him speechless.”

“Okay, I’ll get it,” Hermione told her before she stepped back into the changing room. She closed the curtains and changed into her original clothes again.

Mia turned to face Harry before slapping him up the back of his head. Startled by the jolt, Harry spun around to look at Mia with a shocked expression as he rubbed the back of his head.

“What was that for?” Harry demanded.

“You are useless – you could have let her know what you thought instead of mumbling,” Mia informed him before turning her back on him and resumed her search for a matching skirt. She quickly found one and paid for her purchases as Hermione came out clad in her normal clothes. She handed the outfit to the seller, who wrapped them up and took the money Hermione held out before handing her some change back.

“Come on - Quidditch stuff next,” Ron informed them as they exited the stall and followed Ron to where there were rows of Quidditch stuff being sold. Hermione noticed that there was a stall selling t-shirts. She made her way over to it and started raking through the selections.

Hermione grinned when her eye caught sight of the perfect shirt and spoke to the seller. He looked at rummaged behind the counter for the right size before holding it up for Hermione’s appraisal. It was a royal red colour and had a picture of a lion’s head on the front and the word Gryffindor arced underneath in gold.

“Hey, Hermione, why do you want that?” Ron asked curiously only for his eyes to widen when the seller turned it around so that they could see the back. Harry started spluttering in shock.

Harry Potter decorated the back in gold lettering with the number 17 under it and the word Seeker lined at the bottom of the t-shirt. Hermione shrugged as she smiled at Ron.

“I gotta support my house team, right?” she asked. “What better way to do that than support my favourite seeker?” she handed over the money as the seller folded it up and placed it into the bag before handing her the bag and the change. “Thank you.”

She turned back to face the gang only to see Harry looking confused, Mia giggling and Ron looking amused.

“Can they actually do that?” Harry asked as Hermione slipped her arm through his and led him away. Hermione nodded.

“Yes, Hogwarts and the Quidditch committee have a contract of agreement. Any Quidditch player who plays on the school team gets sponsored for their own t-shirts and things,” Hermione explained.

“Oh,” Harry told her as he allowed himself to be led away.

“And I’m guessing he didn’t know that,” Ron told Mia, who nodded in agreement as they hurried to catch up with the other pair. They reached the tent and saw Sirius outside talking with Lupin. Arthur was listening to something Percy was saying while nodding. The twins were conversing with each other and Ginny turned to look at their approach and smiled when she saw Harry.

“Hey Harry!” she greeted. Harry just gave her a short nod before Lupin picked up on Harry’s slightly shocked mood.

“What’s wrong Harry?” Lupin asked. Hermione smiled slightly.

“Harry is a little shocked that people actually sell t-shirts with his name on the back,” Hermione explained. “When I purchased this one,” she continued.

Sirius winced in remembrance. “Sorry Harry. I meant to warn you about that,” Sirius apologised to the young man but Harry shook his head.

“I’m okay – I think I’m getting used to the idea,” Harry told them before frowning. “I hope.” Sirius just smiled at his nephew before he turned to the others.

“Okay, time to go and watch the game,” Sirius told them as he led them up towards the stadium. Ron had just painted one side of his face red while leaving the other one bare and the twins dug out some flags. They were eagerly making their way up the stairs when a cold voice stopped them all.

“Well, well, well, look who managed to salvage enough money to get tickets,” Lucius informed them. They turned to see him standing in his finest in front of Draco and his wife, Narcissa.

“Oh look!” Mia exclaimed as she rushed over to the barrier before looking down. “I’m higher than you!” The twins ended up snorting back their laughter with Ron. Cedric couldn’t help the grin that appeared over his face before coughing and schooling his face into one of displeasure as his father sent him with a disgusted expression for Mia’s attitude.

Draco turned his face to look at the other side while fighting back his own laughter at his father’s displeasure.

“And that’s the only way you’re gonna be higher than me,” Lucius informed her and Mia rolled her eyes.

“Make sure you don’t walk into a wall,” Mia replied. “You can’t possibly see with your nose that high.” She walked off, leaving Lucius staring after her with a furious glare.

“You know, a wizard can be judged by the company he keeps,” Lucius informed Harry nastily, who smirked in response.

“Hey, my company is better than yours – we don’t bow down to a half blood coward,” Harry informed him before he took Hermione’s hand and they both walked up the stairs after Mia. Lucius was left scowling and Draco covered his smirk behind a hand before replacing it with a scowl as his father looked at him.

Lucius continued to follow Fudge while Narcissa nudged her son - both of them amused as they followed Lucius.

Harry and the rest found their seats. Harry was sitting in between Hermione and Ron. Mia was sitting to the left side of Hermione and sitting next to Cedric. The twins were sitting next to Ron while the adults sat in the back next to an empty space and a house elf - one that Harry thought looked remarkably like Dobby.

Harry turned back to the front of the box and they watched the team cheerleaders make their way out to the pitch. The first group was

made up of sexy girls wearing silver dresses and once they were set they started a very suggestive dance.

Harry just tilted his head, confused about why the girls were dancing in such a display.

"What are those?" Harry asked, curious to why they were doing the sexy dance. Mia snickered.

"Harry - they're veelas," Mia reminded him and Harry's eyes widened in shock as he looked around and saw that a majority of the males in the stands were all showing off in one way or another. He saw Ron looking to get ready to jump off the stands down onto the pitch and reached out a hand to hold him in place.

"Why am I not affected?" Harry asked, confused.

"Because you don't just go for looks and you've been trained to close your mind," Sirius reminded as he helped Harry to drag Ron back away from the railing despite Ron's distracted struggles. Once the Veelas stopped singing and dancing, Ron looked around in confusion before he settled himself back into his seat, much to the amusement of the girls and the elder males.

Then the leprechauns came out, throwing fireworks and handfuls of gold all over the place.

"Ooh, Money," Ron exclaimed but Hermione shook her head.

"They're fools gold," Hermione explained to Ron. Ron looked at her, puzzled. "They vanish in twenty four hours."

"Oh, well, that's lovely isn't it?" Ron asked sarcastically.

"It's amusing to see people trying to pay off their debts with it," Percy informed them and Mia grinned at the elder Weasley before she turned back to the front. Finally it was time for the teams to come out.

Ron and the twins jumped up and down cheering and hollering when Viktor Krum's name was announced. Mia and Hermione just rolled their eyes in amusement while Harry just eyed the guys warily.

“If I didn’t know any better, I’d say you all fancied him,” Harry remarked, causing them to look at him in shock. Harry just shrugged. “Just saying.” The twins and Ron sat back down with small frowns. Harry turned back to watch the action on the pitch with a mischievous glint in his eyes, one that Hermione thought she recognised.

Hermione reached over and backhanded Harry on the chest, causing him to look at her. “You’re mean,” she teased him and Harry just shot her his half-smirk before he took her hand in his.

The game was exciting to some extent but Hermione found herself becoming bored. She absently realised it was because Harry wasn’t playing. For some reason, Quidditch was always more exciting when Harry played and she wished she had brought a book or something to keep her busy.

Hermione turned her head when she felt Harry squeezing her hand and locked gazes with him, who smiled softly.

“Don’t worry, I think it’s nearly over – Krum is looking for the snitch,” he told her. Hermione couldn’t help the soft smile that crossed her face before she leaned over and rested her head on Harry’s shoulder to watch the rest of the action.

Ginny couldn’t help the glare that came to her face as she watched the two of them from her seat behind them. But she turned her glare back to the game while wishing that she wasn’t alone.

The game finally came to a stop with Krum catching the snitch. Ron howled when he realised that Ireland had won the game.

“Why did he catch the snitch? He didn’t win!” Ron complained.

“He knew that Ireland was going to win – they were too far ahead in points so he grabbed the snitch to make sure that they didn’t lose by a larger margin,” Harry explained. Ron nodded sulkily while Hermione shook her head at how childish Ron was acting.

Now that the game was over, everyone started to get up from their seats and moving their way back to their sleeping areas.

“Okay kids, back to the camp!” Sirius called out as he led them down the stairs. While making their way down Hermione kept her head on Harry’s shoulder and Harry had his arm slung over hers to hold her close as they walked. Mia and Ron were chatting animatedly over the game, still high on their excitement.

None of them knew that others had plans in store for them

TBC

Chapter 3: Troubles, Questions and Home

Everyone was sitting around the fire near their tents as the twins sang a song about Ron fancying Viktor - much to everyone's amusement and Ron's annoyance.

Harry was sitting on a log just staring into the fire, lost in his thoughts. He couldn't help the feeling of dread that was coiling in the middle of his gut and he couldn't help the bad feelings gnawing at his mind. He knew that something was going to happen soon and it was making him antsy.

"Getting the feeling that something is about to happen?" Mia whispered to Harry, who nodded in return.

"Big time," he told her as he looked around the camp as if trying to see which direction the trouble would be coming from.

"What are you two whispering about?" Sirius asked and Mia turned to look at her dad before smiling sweetly.

"Nothing really. Just asking how Harry was going to try and sneak Hermione into his bed tonight," Mia told him. Harry choked on the sip of juice he had just taken and Hermione arched an eyebrow at him.

"No we weren't!" Harry denied loudly before shooting Mia a hard glare. She just smiled in return before she turned her attention back to cooking marshmallows.

Hermione pulled her marshmallows out of the fire and placed them onto a cracker. She spread melted chocolate sauce over the marshmallows and placed another graham cracker on top of it. She was about to eat it when she felt someone move closer to her.

"What's that?" Ron asked curiously as he moved closer to Hermione, eyeing her treat. Hermione looked over to Harry with an amused smile, who couldn't help but smile knowingly back. Ron was acting like a five year old kid.

“It’s a smore,” Hermione told him as she handed the chocolate treat over to Ron. Ron took it and took a large bite before groaning with delight.

Hermione rolled her eyes as another treat appeared in front of her face. She turned and saw Harry holding it out for her with a smile.

“Thought you would give yours to Ron,” Harry told her and received a smile in return as she took the treat, brushing her fingers over his. She bit into it and closed her eyes in pleasure as the gooey chocolate and marshmallow melded together on her tongue. When she opened her eyes again she saw Harry staring at her hungrily.

Harry was starting to lean in when he was interrupted by screaming and shouting around the camp. Sirius looked over to where an explosion boomed over to the north of their location.

Everyone watched in morbid fascination at the display - tents were on fire and people were running about wildly, screaming and searching for cover.

A ball of fire shot out from nowhere, narrowly missing Mia, who just jumped off to the side.

“What the hell?” Mia demanded before she ducked again as another came her way.

“Move it!” Sirius shouted, now understanding what was happening.

The kids started running but Harry stopped when he saw something out of the corner of his eyes. Mia had stopped next to him, watching the same scene as Harry.

Hermione shouted Harry’s name and Harry barely saw Hermione disappear as she left via the portkey.

Harry looked around and saw a blonde haired figure heading towards him. Harry and Mia couldn’t help the grins that appeared on their faces as Draco moved closer to them.

“Death eaters,” Draco hissed and Mia grinned.

“Time to have fun?” she asked and Harry looked at his cousins before smiling.

“Go ahead,” he told them and they happily split up in three directions.

Harry grabbed the earpiece from his pocket and slipped it into his ear as he looked around.

“Mia’s in contact,” Mia’s voice came through.

“Draco’s in contact,” Draco’s voice sounded.

“Harry’s in contact, I can hear everyone clearly, can you hear me clearly?” Harry asked.

“Roger that,” Draco and Mia confirmed at the same time as they continued to walk their path, keeping an eye out for both attackers and victims.

“Are they using killing spells?” Harry asked, curious as to what the others were seeing.

“Yeah but they’re not killing anyone,” Draco replied.

“They are using the curse to scare people. They won’t risk killing anyone – not while Voldie is still dead,” Mia explained.

“Fucker,” Harry muttered as he ducked a yellow curse that shot just over his head. “They’re using all three unforgivables,” Harry told them.

He ran up behind a Death Eater and hit him across the back of his head with a log that he had found, knocking the Death Eater unconscious. He reached down and grabbed a pole that had come from a broken tent but was sharpened at the edge from where it had been snapped.

Harry spun around and threw the pole at a death eater that had snuck up behind him. It embedded itself into his chest smoothly and the death eater looked down in surprise at his body before falling onto his knees. He fell backward as blood continued to pour from the wound.

Mia heard a cracking noise and spun around to see a death eater heading towards her. He snapped a spell at her but she twisted out of its path and faced him squarely once more, rendering him speechless that she hadn't tried to run off yet.

"What's the matter? You look shocked about something," Mia taunted before she spun to her left and delivered a kick, planting her foot in the Death Eater's stomach and sent him flying backward as she ducked another spell heading towards her.

She rolled back up onto her feet and pulled the sides of her jacket away from her legs and pulled out two short swords out of the scabbards attached to her legs just as a bright green light headed in her direction.

Reacting quickly, she drew the swords up, crossing them into an x just as the green light hit the intersection. She separated the swords, rebounding the spell back towards her attacker and saw him sink immediately to the ground.

Mia just grinned before she bolted off to the side and left the dead death eater alone as she went in search for more when she heard Harry's voice speak into her ear.

"I'm missing my wand," Harry muttered as he felt his pockets.

"When did you have it last?" a crackly female voice came over the earpiece.

"Before we sat down at the stadium. I remember checking to make sure it was still there but I forgot to check again on the way back down," Harry admitted.

"So that means someone lifted your wand while watching the game... but people were surrounding us... meaning that there was no way for anyone to take it unless..." Mia trailed off.

"They were wearing an invisibility cloak! It could hide the hand as it drew the wand out – no one would have noticed any difference," Draco finished.

“Oh that’s just bloody brilliant,” Harry muttered as he rubbed his forehead before he looked around. “Are all of them gone or have they just moved on to a new place here?”

“They’re gone,” a female voice informed him from behind. He turned to see Mia and Draco making their way toward him.

“Good. Now do you have any idea who could have taken my wand?” Harry asked when all off a sudden there was a loud raspy shout and green smoke shot into the sky.

All three of them looked around for the source of the voice before they looked up and saw the spell that it had created.

“Oh my...” Mia whispered.

Above them was a face of a skull. A snake was wound around it with its head coming out of the skull’s mouth.

“The Dark Mark,” Draco hushed out before shaking his head. “Now I know what dad had planned.”

Everyone spun around when they heard voices and running footsteps before Harry and Mia turned to Draco.

“You gotta go before anyone finds you here,” Mia hissed to Draco, who nodded quickly before he Disapparated.

“Harry!” Hermione shouted. Harry turned and saw Hermione running over to him. She threw herself in his arms and Harry could feel her shaking.

“Hey, I’m okay,” he whispered as he held her close, rubbing his hands up and down her back in an effort to comfort her.

“You scared me when you disappeared like that,” she whispered when all of a sudden Mia lunged at them and knocked them to the ground just as red lights shot over their heads.

“Those bloody arrogant politicking fuckers,” Mia muttered angrily under her breath as she stood up and brushed the dirt off of her

clothes. As she did her hands encountered something and her eyes widened as she turned her head to look more closely at it. “They *ripped* my top!” she exclaimed, stunned and furious at the same time. Harry bit back a laugh as he stood up and helped Hermione up off the ground and brushed most of the dirt off her.

“Relax, you can fix it later,” he told her, causing her to glare at him.

“Those are my children!” a loud male voice roared with anger. Everyone spun around to see Sirius running towards the kids. One of the Ministry officials moved to stop Sirius but was shoved to the ground by Sirius’ desperate strength as he hurried over to them. “Are you okay?” he demanded while running his hands over Harry and Mia to check for any injuries.

“Dad, we’re fine,” Mia promised as she pushed her dad’s hands off her. Sirius sighed and stepped back and watched as more Ministry officials made their way over to the kids.

They came to a stop in front of them and Mia decided to let loose.

“Who the hell taught you how to use a wand?” Mia demanded. Everyone looked at her. “You shot at us! Three innocent kids!”

“We had every reason to believe that you were the ones causing the trouble!” Fudge exclaimed and Mia threw her hands up in disgust.

“By who, Lucius Malfoy?” she asked sarcastically. “We all know just how good his word is.”

“Miss Black...” Fudge started but was cut off.

“And not to mention that you could have killed us with your stupid spells – that would have been great – the Boy-Who-Lived killed by stupid Minister,” Mia informed them. “And you own me a new top! You ripped it!”

Hermione rolled her eyes at Mia but they were all interrupted by a cry of delight.

"I found a wand!" Bagman exclaimed as he picked it up from the ground and brought it over to the group. He tapped the wand with his own while muttering a curse under his breath.

A sickly green smoke came out of the wand, showing that it was indeed the wand that was used to create the Death Mark in the air. Harry, on the other hand, recognised the wand.

"Hey, that's my wand!" Harry exclaimed as he went to grab it but Bagman yanked it out of reach.

"Are you admitting the crime?" Bagman demanded but Harry glared at him.

"No! I lost my wand after the game!" Harry informed him and a glint came appeared in Bagman's eyes.

"Ah, a convenient excuse!" Bagman exclaimed. Hermione's eyes narrowed at the man.

"Are you calling Harry a liar?" Hermione demanded as she took a step forward. "The one person who saved your worthless ass from Voldemort and you're calling him a liar?"

"No," Bagman stuttered out, taking a step back from the young female before Crouch stepped forward.

"Which one of you cast that spell?" Crouch demanded as he snapped his wand from one kid to the next, pinning them with a glare.

Harry and Hermione looked insulted while Mia turned to her dad.

"Can I hit him?" Mia pleaded to her dad with her hands clasped in a petitioning manner her under her chin. "Pretty please?"

"You wouldn't dare to try and hit someone who works for the ministry," Crouch snapped and Mia shot him a dark look.

"One that accuses us of supporting Voldemort, we would," Mia informed him.

“What did you expect us to think?” Crouch demanded. “You were the only ones here and it was Harry’s wand that was used to call *that!*” he pointed to the symbol in the sky emphatically and Mia threw up her hands in frustration.

“Oh and pray tell just how the hell Harry or I would even know how to conjure one of those up?” She demanded. “It’s not as if we support Voldemort is it?”

“Wouldn’t surprise me if you did,” Crouch muttered only to take a step back as Mia made to punch him. A pair of hands held her back from going any further.

“Now, that’s a bad move,” Harry stated under his breath.

“Get off of me!” Mia snapped as she fought the man’s hands that were holding her back.

“Calm down missy,” the man stated and she glowered at him.

“Go to hell,” she told him before lifting her right foot and slamming it down, hard.

The man let out a scream and pushed her away from him. He hopped as he clutched at his foot. “No one and I mean no one touches me without my permission,” she informed him.

“Control your daughter!” Bagman shouted at Sirius, who raised his eyebrows.

“I couldn’t control Callie! What makes you think I can control my daughter?” he demanded and Harry snorted, trying to keep his laughter at bay when he saw the redness starting appears on the official’s face.

“You know, we should go,” Harry stated and they all turned to face him. “Hermione is still a little shaken up after everything that happened and Mia is obviously upset too or she wouldn’t be trying to knock everyone’s head off,” Harry explained and Sirius nodded, catching on.

"Yes, I agree. I know my daughter - she's just lashing out through her frustration and fear of the Death Eaters," Sirius stated, leaving Mia spluttering in annoyance. Hermione reached out, resting her hand on Mia's arm.

"I feel the same," Hermione stated and Mia shot her an annoyed glance before giving in.

"Of course... why wouldn't I be scared?" she muttered.

There was a rustling noise, causing everyone to look towards the bushes before Harry frowned.

"Wasn't that where the spell came from?" Mia asked Harry, who nodded.

Several of the Ministry officials provided cover and Crouch reached into the bushes and came out holding a House Elf by the skin of her neck. Harry noticed that it was the same house elf that he had seen up in the stadium. He watched as Crouch dropped her on the ground and looked through the bushes once more. He seemed frustrated when he turned back to the house elf.

"Barty, isn't that your house elf?" Bagman asked and Barty nodded.

"Yes, it is. I had ordered her to go back to the tent but she disobeyed me," Crouch informed Fudge with a sour mutter. Winky's ear drooped, causing Hermione's heart to melt at the distressed expression that was showing on Winky's face.

"Elf, did you cast that spell?" Bagman demanded. Winky shook her head.

"No!" Winky protested. "Winky never cast any spells!"

"Don't lie!" Bagman snapped. "You were found in the area where the spell had been cast and the wand was near where you were found."

"Winky never cast any spell!" Winky protested. Harry had heard enough.

"It wasn't Winky!" Harry snapped. They looked at him. "It was a male voice who cast the spell – not Winky's."

"And how would you know?" Crouch demanded. Harry rolled his eyes.

"I can hear, you know," Harry shot back at him. "So there is no need to fire Winky just because she didn't cast the spell!"

"No, I fired her because she didn't do her job properly!" Crouch snapped. Mia's forehead crinkled slightly at the wordings.

"What do you mean, didn't do her job properly?" Mia demanded and Crouch looked at her. "She sat on the stadium – up high despite the fact that she didn't like heights - yet you never turned up for the empty seat. She tried to get back to the tent but got lost in the excitement here – it's not a surprising thing considering the fact that everyone was panicking over the Death Eaters attacking. You can't fire her for that."

"Actually I can and I will," Crouch informed her stubbornly before he pulled out a tea towel and threw it at Winky, who clutched onto it, wailing and crying over her dismissal.

"You heartless bast..." the rest of the words were mumbled behind Harry's hand as he covered Hermione's mouth.

"Calm down," Harry whispered to Hermione as Mia moved over to Crouch.

"If you can't even be bothered to look past appearances and appreciate everyone for who they are then you are worthless," Mia informed him before she knelt down in front of Winky and touched her shoulder.

Winky looked up with tearful round eyes. She was sniffing as she clutched the tea towel close to her. "Do you want to come home with me and be bonded to one of us?" Mia whispered.

Hope shone in Winky's eyes that someone would want a dismissed house-elf and Mia smiled as she stood up and held out her hand.

Winky hesitantly reached out and placed her small hand into Mia's outstretched one before Mia led her over to Hermione.

"Mia?" Hermione asked, curious and wary about what her best friend was doing.

"Winky, I'd like you to meet Hermione Granger – she'll be your mistress from now on," Mia told her and Winky nodded as she looked over to Hermione with hope and joy in her eyes.

Hermione bit her bottom lip – she wasn't into slavery but she had seen how the Black family's house elves seemed to get along fine and be quite happy besides. She looked down at Winky for a moment while she made up her mind. Reaching a decision, she held her hand out to Winky.

Winky beamed as she reached up and placed her hand in Hermione's. A bright golden glow appeared around them both, signalling that they were now bonded.

"Winky is now bonded to Miss Granger," Winky informed Hermione, who sported a tentative smile.

"Okay, I want you to go to the Black's house please and we'll meet you there," Hermione told Winky. The house elf bowed her head slightly and disappeared with a soft pop. Hermione turned back to the others.

Sirius shook his head in a mixture of amusement and exasperation.

"At this rate, I'm gonna have to give up one of the houses to the House Elves because there won't be any space left at our house for them to live!" Sirius exclaimed.

"You're stealing house-elves!" Fudge accused and Sirius rolled his eyes.

"Actually, I have the Black's House elves, the Potter's house elves, the Lupin's house elves, and Dobby and Winky. They all came over when their living master came over," Sirius informed the blind Minister.

"We'd better go," Lupin informed them all. "I'm sure you have reports to fill out due to the Death Eaters attacks."

"Yes," Fudge informed him sourly while Sirius moved over to the kids.

"Kids, time to go home!" Sirius declared in agreement. Harry, Hermione and Mia nodded as they moved closer to Sirius. Lupin turned to Arthur.

"We're gonna take the kids home. I have a feeling that if they were to go back to your house that there'd be trouble," Lupin told Arthur, who nodded in understanding.

"I understand. Have a safe trip home," Arthur told him. Lupin nodded before he moved over to where Sirius and the kids were waiting and placed his hand on the portkey. They were transported away from the camping grounds and in front of Grimmauld Place.

"Ah, home sweet home," Mia greeted as she walked up the pathway to her home. She opened the door and smiled when she saw Draco and Narcissa standing in the doorway, taking their cloaks off. "Hey!"

Draco and Narcissa turned around and smiled at Mia.

"How much trouble did you get into?" Draco asked and Mia rolled her eyes as she pulled her cloak off while everyone else coming into the house.

"Not so much," Lupin informed Draco as he placed the camping gear in the storage cupboard next to the coat hanger. "She did try to attack an Auror because he held her back from attacking Crouch."

"Mia," Narcissa moaned but Mia crossed her arms over her chest.

"He insulted us – he claimed that we cast the spell for the stupid dark mark in the air!" Mia exclaimed. "As if we would support Voldemort! Plus the flaming thing looks like a worm-infested pear upside down!"

Draco choked on his laughter as he turned his head away from Mia. Hermione had buried her face into Harry's chest while Harry had

buried his face into Hermione's hair, both of them muffling their own amusement.

Narcissa, Sirius and Lupin just looked at each other, realising what Mia was getting at.

"You know, I never actually noticed that," Sirius muttered, causing nods of agreement from the other two. Narcissa came out of her sudden thoughtful look and pinned Mia with a glare.

"And you're still not getting out of trouble by changing the subject young lady," Narcissa informed Mia sternly, who just pouted. "You can not go around attacking the Ministry! I know you want to act out your frustrations with them but you need to take it slowly." Mia nodded as she sighed and uncrossed her arms.

"So, what do we do when we go back to school?" Draco asked and Harry sighed as he pulled his face from Hermione's hair and shrugged.

"Act like normal?" Harry suggested but Sirius was quick to nix that idea.

"Absolutely not! I do not want you all picking arguments with the teachers – that goes for all of you," Sirius informed them, giving Mia a pointed look.

"Snape always picks on Hermione!" Mia exclaimed.

"I don't care," Sirius informed them all and they looked at him. "Be on your guard from now on – the fact that Death Eaters were running about amok and that the dark mark was in the air – it's not coincidence. Something is happening, and I don't want anything to happen to any of you."

"What do you think it all means?" Draco asked and Narcissa sighed.

"One of the Ministry people has disappeared – Bertha Jorkins, She said that was heading to Romania – there was a rumour stating that Voldemort is now hiding out at Romania - and no one has heard back

from her. We have to assume the worst,” Narcissa told them and Hermione sighed.

“Voldemort or one of his men had her killed,” Hermione stated and got nods in return. “Let’s just hope they gave her a quick death. But why would they kill her – did she find out some information or was she just in the wrong place at the wrong time?”

“The Goblet of Fire,” Draco spoke up and they looked at him. “I overheard dad talking about the Goblet of Fire and how it would be perfect but that was all I got.”

Sirius and Narcissa looked at each other before Narcissa sighed and shook her head. “What?” Draco asked, concerned. The adults turned back to face the children.

“The Goblet of Fire is an event that happens every 50 years or so... but it hasn't been used in a long time because of the death rates – the fact that you heard Lucius talking about it, along with everything else makes me believe that they have finally overturned the ban and brought it back,” Sirius explained. “I believe that it will be hosted at Hogwarts.”

“Oh well, that’s just fantastic,” Mia muttered. “We don’t get enough danger at school, so they gotta bring more in.”

“Okay - I think you all should get to bed now. We have to get up early for shopping in the morning,” Sirius announced. As Mia made her way towards the stairs she turned back to face Harry and Sirius with a furious expression.

“One of those days - you won’t know when or where - but you will know why,” Mia warned them with her index finger pointing at first one then the other before she stormed up the stairs. “Scared little girl... who the hell do they think they’re talking about?” she muttered angrily while Sirius and Harry looked at each other and Draco smirked.

“Man, it’s good not to be the one her bad side for once,” Draco stated before heading into the kitchen. Hermione covered her mouth with her right hand, holding back her laughter.

“Good luck,” she told them, patting Harry’s shoulder in mock sympathy before she headed up the stairs after Mia.

“Now, *that’s* going to be entertaining,” she told the warned pair with a large smile as she headed into the living room, leaving Sirius and Harry staring at each other with a slight trace of fear in their eyes.

TBC

Chapter 4: Packing, Shocks and Hogwarts.

"Kids, get a move on!" Sirius shouted from where he was standing at the bottom of the stairs, He sent Lupin, who was standing next to him, a look of exasperation at having to "mother the kids" as he referred to it.

Ron had come up with the rest of the Weasley family so that they all could go to the train station together. Molly had been insistent and no one had been able to persuade her otherwise.

"One minute!" Mia shouted back from Ron's room, where the late teens were helping him pack. Molly went up the stairs and into the room with a box in her arms.

"Oh, you kids are still here," she told them before she handed Ron the box. "Here you are." Ron took the box with a puzzled look on his face, wondering what his mother had given him. "It's something special."

Ron turned and sat the box on the bed and opened it. He pushed the tissues aside and adopted an expression of horror once he saw what was inside.

"What the hell is this?" Ron demanded as he lifted out the old dress robes. They were some sort of pink colour with other colours mixed in to make some kind of odd pattern. The edges were lined with pink frills and the shirt looked even worse.

"Those are your dress robes," Molly informed her son.

Hermione, Harry and Mia looked at each other in horror. They had assumed that Molly had taken Ron shopping for new robes but it looked like they were wrong.

"Are you kidding me?" Ron demanded. "This is not what they wear at balls!" Ron exclaimed.

"They used to," Molly informed her son stiffly before she left the room. The four kids looked at each other before an idea came to them.

“Shopping trip!” Harry, Mia and Hermione exclaimed as they grabbed Ron and hauled him over to the fireplace. They quickly flooded over to Madam Malkin’s for a new set of dress robes for Ron.

All four of them tumbled out of the fireplace into the shop, startling Madam Malkin, who obviously was not expecting customers.

She covered her heart when she realised who the customers were and sighed with relief that it wasn’t people who were going to rob the place or anything.

“Kids!” she scolded as she watched them scramble to stand up.

“We need a set of dress robes for Ron,” Hermione blurted out and Madam Malkin looked at her, shocked. “Mrs. Weasley got him one of those old fashioned ones!” Understanding dawned on the elder woman’s face and she nodded.

“Okay, what kind of robes should Ron have?” she asked.

“Black robes and a light blue shirt,” Mia informed the seamstress. The blue will go with his eyes.” Madam Malkin’s eyed Ron and nodded as she agreed with Mia’s explanation.

“If you’ll get on the stool I’ll measure you, but it will be a while before you will get the robes,” she informed them and Harry nodded.

“That’s fine, as long he gets them before the ball – we’ll be fine,” Harry told her and she smiled down at the young man before she moved over to Ron and started measuring him.

Once she had gotten his measurements down, Ron hopped down from the stool and headed over to the gang once more.

“Thank you so much,” Ron told them but Hermione waved it off.

“You’re our best friend Ron. If we’re going to ball, I want us all to have a good time - and you being in those robes your mom bought certainly would stand in the way of that,” Hermione informed him.

They all moved back over to the fireplace and flooed back to the house where angry and worried parents were waiting for them.

“Where the hell have you been?” Sirius demanded as the kids came back through the fireplace.

“Sorry,” Mia coughed out. She had inhaled some soot when she came out of the fireplace and she shook her head. “Had some emergency shopping to do.” Sirius shook his head in frustration and amusement before he gathered their trunks.

“Come on, we need to get you to the station,” Sirius told them and he led the way out of the house as everyone followed him.

They piled into the cars as quickly as they could. Harry, Hermione, Ron and Mia were sharing a car that Sirius was driving, while the twins, Ginny, Molly, Arthur and Lupin followed in a car Lupin was driving. They both had been enchanted so that everyone could fit into the car.

When they finally arrived at the train station Sirius and Lupin helped the kids grab their trunks and head over to the barrier that hid the Hogwarts Express.

They passed through the barrier and spotted the train. The kids grinned at each other in excitement before they hurried over to the prefects that were loading the trunks onto the train before rushing back to the parents to say goodbye.

“You kids be careful and don’t overstep your mark, please?” Sirius told them, the last bit directed to Mia, who rolled her eyes.

“Dad, relax – I’m not gonna go and kill the teachers off,” Mia told her dad, who just smiled down at his daughter.

“I know – just don’t bruise their egos too much,” Sirius teased back. Mia just rolled her eyes again and laughed while the others shook their heads. The train whistle blew, signalling that it was time for everyone to board or be left behind.

“Okay, get on the train – we’ll see you soon,” Lupin told them as he kissed Hermione and Mia on their foreheads and patted Harry on the shoulder. He joined the other parents in watching the kids board the train and waved back at them in kind. Then he turned to face his best friend only to find that Sirius was staring after the departing train with a pensive look on his face - one that worried the werewolf.

On board, the kids were moving away from the window to find a compartment once the train pulled away from the station

“Hey,” Lupin said leadingly as he shook Sirius’ shoulder only for Sirius to shake his head as he turned to face his best friend.

“I can’t help but have a bad feeling about this year, and I hope that I’m wrong,” Sirius told Lupin. Lupin just stared back with his own earlier feelings of dread now coiling in the pit of his stomach and hoped that Sirius was wrong too. He didn’t say anything more as they both turned to face the departed train.

Meanwhile, the kids were having fun knowing that they were going back to Hogwarts. Harry, Hermione and Ron had gone ahead to get a compartment while Mia had found Lavender and ended up in a conversation with her.

Mia was making her way down the corridor when she bumped into Cedric and two of his friends.

“Hey Cedric,” Mia greeted and Cedric smiled.

“Hey, how was the rest of your break?” Cedric asked and Mia rolled her eyes.

“Hectic – we had to go shopping for dress robes at the last minute,” Mia explained. Cedric winced.

“Yeah, I saw that on my list. Mum was so excited when she read that,” Cedric told her and Mia laughed.

“My dad freaked when he read it – he couldn’t believe that fourteen year olds were going to a ball,” Mia told him and Cedric laughed. He

could imagine Sirius's reaction toward that, especially when he saw how Sirius had reacted to him when they had first met.

"I can see why but I'm sure everyone else is excited about it," Cedric told her and Mia grinned.

"Hey, I just love a good excuse to party," she flirted at him before she looked behind Cedric and rolled her eyes. "I gotta go, I'll catch you later." She brushed past the boys and headed over to where Hermione was calling her.

Cedric and his two friends watched as Mia continued down the hallway and tilted their heads slightly to follow the way Mia's jeans hugged her behind before a cough broke into their thoughts.

They turned to see Percy standing behind them, looking at them with an arched eyebrow. He had seen the how they were looking at Mia and knew what they were thinking.

"Would you gentlemen like to find a compartment?" Percy asked. The boys coughed slightly in embarrassment and made their way down the hallway in compliance.

Percy just watched them go before shaking his head and he continued his patrol of the hallway, making sure that everyone was settled properly.

Cedric found himself sitting in their compartment staring out of the window as he thought about Mia. He couldn't help but feel attracted to her. She was certainly attractive, but it was more than that. There was something about her that just drew him in.

Cedric came out of his thoughts when he felt a thump on his arm and turned to see one of his friends staring at him with an amused expression.

"Where did you go?" He asked, amused, and another laughed.

"Same place Mia Black went," the other informed him. "Did you see how he stared after her when she left?"

“Ha, Ha,” Cedric informed them sarcastically and the first male rolled his eyes.

“Liven up Cedric – we’re just kidding around,” he told her but the second male shook his head.

“I wasn’t – that Mia is certainly shaping up nicely. Not to mention fiery. Wonder just how hot she could be in bed,” the second male told them.

“Jack...” Cedric started but the first male jumped in.

“I actually like Hermione better – you know what they say... the silent ones are the ones to look out for,” he informed them.

“John...” Cedric started again but was cut off.

“Hey, I wouldn’t mind if I had either one in my bed,” Jack told them with a wriggle of his eyebrows and Cedric rolled his eyes.

“And keep dreaming guys,” Cedric informed them and they looked at him. “Hermione is Harry’s and you know it. Mia will probably kick both your asses if you go near her.”

“We know,” Jack informed him with a grin. “But we can still dream.” Cedric just rolled his eyes as he turned back to the window.

“So, what is going on with you and Cedric?” Ron asked, curious about witnessing Mia’s first indication of flirting with a guy. Mia glanced at him before sighing.

“Oh come on! Not you too!” Mia whined but Ron just held firm. He wanted answers. Mia rolled her eyes after a brief pause. “God, he’s just a friend.”

“A friend?” Harry jumped in. “Mia, you were holding hands with him when you arrived at the portkey spot and you were flirting with him.”

“Okay!” Mia exclaimed as she threw her hands up in surrender before taking a deep breath. “God, Cedric and I are just flirting partners – we flirt every now and then. It’s not such a big deal.”

“Mia...” Ron started but Mia jumped in.

“I’m not gonna run off, elope with him and have babies - I’m just having fun! When Voldemort comes back, I hardly think I’m gonna have a lot of time for relationships, remember?” Mia asked and both boys backed down.

Harry understood where Mia was coming from and nodded in resignation while Ron just sighed and ran a hand through his red locks.

“Look, we’re just being protective of you - that’s our job. You’re protective of us, and we’re protective of you,” Ron told her and Mia smiled as she squeezed Ron’s arm.

“And I love you guys for it but could you just lay off my love life please – I don’t bug you about yours,” Mia reminded.

“No, you just bet on ours,” Harry informed her and Mia chuckled in amusement while Hermione just smiled at the gang, obviously amused.

“Wanna jump in here any time soon?” Mia asked and Hermione laughed.

“Nah, I’m having too much fun just watching you guys,” Hermione assured them as Crookshanks jumped up onto her lap and curled himself up into a ball. Hermione ran her hand through his fur as they all talked about the Quidditch match and what they could expect next about the new DADA teacher.

“Who do you think it’ll be?” Ron asked and Harry shrugged.

“Uncle Lupin wasn’t sure who it would be. Apparently Dumbledore has been keeping his mouth shut on the topic but there is something he did hear,” Harry told them and Ron leaned in, interested. “A new kid is arriving at school – apparently McGonagall threw a fit about having a new kid come in with all the troubles that have been happening and she doesn’t want to tempt fate.”

“Lovely, does anyone know who the new kid is or where he's from?” Ron asked and Mia shook her head.

“Nope, all we know is that it's a he,” Mia told him and Ron nodded in understanding.

“Great, what about the Death Eaters – any more news on that?” Ron asked and Hermione shook her head negatively.

“No, the Ministry has nothing more to go on – despite all the dead bodies that were found,” Hermione informed him, a bit annoyed.

“How do you mean?” Ron asked. He rarely read the Daily Prophet because it didn't really talk about Quidditch anymore, so there wasn't a lot of interest for him there.

“The Minister said that the death eaters who were killed the were the same ones who claimed they were under the Imperious Curse – they believe that it had happened again and they were victims of a mindless accident,” Mia mocked out. “Sooner or later, maybe the Ministry will realize that the Imperious Curse wears off because the mind slowly builds a resistance to it. Of course they were liars, but the Ministry is blind – as usual.”

“You can hardly blame them,” Harry told her and Mia shrugged.

“I can if I want – it's because of them Voldemort was allowed to rise in the first place. If they actually would take responsibility these days, none of this would be happening,” Mia reminded Harry, who just sighed. He knew Mia was right but the world didn't see it that way.

“With you on the war path – they'll have to accept it sooner or later,” Ron informed her with a cheeky grin only to get an eye roll in return as they all settled back and relaxed on the rest of the ride to Hogwarts.

After pulling into the station, they made their way into the Great Hall and settled down to watch the first years get sorted. After the normal procession without any real surprises, they turned to face Dumbledore as he stood to address the students.

“We have a new student joining us today,” Dumbledore announced and they all turned to face the door to see a tall dark haired male step into the room. A majority of the girls sighed when they saw him.

He wore a plain black robe. His dark hair was spiked up; giving the air of a devil may care attitude.

“He’s hot!” Lavender stated to Mia while keeping an eye on the new kid before she cupped her chin and rested her elbow on the table. “Wonder how he’d be in bed.”

“Lav!?” Mia scolded before shooting her a teasing grin. “Shouldn’t you at least go with kissing first?” Lavender just grinned back.

“Everyone, this is Hunter Wolf,” Dumbledore introduced.

“Hunter, hm?” Parvati stated with a lick of her lips. “I sure wouldn’t mind being the prey of that predator.”

“God!” Mia rolled her eyes at the blatant lust from the girls before she eyed the boy and frowned slightly. There was something about this new guy that had her on edge – she had a feeling that she had met him before but couldn’t place where.

The boy sat down on the stool to be sorted before McGonagall walked over to him and placed the hat on his head. The hat mulled over its decision before finally settling on one.

“Slytherin!” the hat shouted. The girls over second year cheered as Hunter made his way over to their table while Lavender fanned herself.

“A hot guy in Slytherin – that means he’s one bad boy,” Lavender informed them causing Hermione to choke on her drink, giggling.

“Sorry,” Hermione told them when she calmed down before turning her face away from Harry and concentrated on Dumbledore as he stood up once more.

“Now that everyone has been sorted, a few more announcements. We have a new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher but he had

been delayed and is not yet here,” Dumbledore informed them. “And I have news – Quidditch has been cancelled because something else will be taking its place this year.”

There was uproar from all the Quidditch teams but Dumbledore raised his hands, silencing them. “Everything will be revealed in time; please calm down.” Once the general murmur had died down, Dumbledore continued. “Hogwarts will be hosting a great event. Visitors will be coming to Hogwarts, so I trust that its students will be on their best behaviour.”

He scanned his eyes over the children before clapping his hands and giving them a bright smile. “With that said, I have just a few other things to mention. Mr. Filch has added more things to ‘Not Allowed’ rules, so please take care and read about them on the list on his door. The Forbidden Forest, as always, is out of bounds. Now – Dinner!”

The food appeared on the tables and everyone leapt into action as they filled their plates.

“So, who do you think the DADA teacher is and why are they so late?” Fred asked as he leaned in to grab a roll.

“I suppose we’ll find out soon,” Hermione told them only for everyone to jump when lightening crashed outside right next to the school.

“That was way too close,” Mia told them as she eyed the window. “Guess something major is going to happen.”

The Great Hall doors slammed open, causing the first years to scream and the older ones to jump again as their heads spun around to face the intruder.

The figure was very disfigured. The face was gnarly and wrinkled; obviously the person had been through a quite of a lot battles. He was walking on a peg leg and he had an eye patch over his forehead.

He made his way through the Great Hall with everyone staring at him. Dumbledore stood up with a proud smile clear on his face as the intruder moved closer to him.

“Alastor Moody?” The Twins, Ron, Harry and Mia whispered together at the same time, shocked.

“Alastor Moody?” Hermione asked, confused and Harry turned to her.

“He used to work at the Ministry – I’m pretty sure that he still does in secret – and he made a living out of catching wizards who used the dark arts. He was a major fighter in the first war with Voldemort. Officially he’s retired from the Ministry and he’s absolutely paranoid – convinced that the dark arts were growing bigger and all that,” Harry explained. Hermione looked at the man, who was now shaking hands with Dumbledore.

“I wonder how Dumbledore convinced him to come up to Hogwarts to teach,” Hermione murmured.

Dumbledore turned back to the students.

“Students – I would like to introduce you to your new Defence Against The Dark Arts teacher – Alastor Moody!” Dumbledore introduced him and everyone hesitantly clapped for the new teacher while Moody took a sip from his silver flask.

“What do you suppose he’s drinking?” Seamus asked as he leaned into Harry, who shook his head.

“I doubt it’s pumpkin juice,” Harry remarked and everyone turned back to their dinner as Parvati leaned over this time.

“So, Mia, how hot do you think the new boy is?” she asked Mia, who looked at her before looking at Hunter and shrugging.

“Seems alright to me,” Mia informed her. Lavender’s jaw dropped at Mia’s obvious brush off.

“Oh come on! That boy is *fine*,” Lavender informed Mia as she looked at Hunter, who was talking to one of his new housemates. “Damn, I wouldn’t kick him out of bed.”

“Lav,” Mia started but Lavender just cupped Mia’s chin and forced her to look at Hunter.

“Are you telling me that he’s not at least a little bit hot on your radar?” Lavender demanded.

Mia sighed as she again looked toward Hunter and eyed him. She had to admit that Lavender and Parvati were right. The guy was hot – with the spiked hair and the grin he shot at his house mate along with a relaxed and confident attitude and the dark brown eyes – there was no girl that wouldn’t fall for him.

“Lav,” Mia started as she pulled her chin away from Lavender’s grip. “Yes, I admit the guy is hot but come on – that is a classic case of a bad boy, and I’m not interested in bad boys because all they want is one thing. And once they get it they lose interest and move on to someone else.”

“So?” Parvati demanded, not getting what Mia was getting worked up about and Mia rolled her eyes.

“So, I’d rather not waste my time with men who obviously are only interested in me for one thing when I could have a relationship with someone who actually wants me for me,” Mia informed the girls.

“Oh come on – you don’t need to give them what they want, just string them along while having fun,” Parvati told her and Mia snorted.

“Sorry honey – they always get what they want. They know how to seduce you easily and then you’re on your back and they’ve taken it before you even realise it,” Mia informed them, causing everyone to look at her.

“And *just* how do you know that?” Harry asked dangerously and Mia rolled her eyes.

“I’ve seen it happen way too many times,” Mia informed her brother. “Don’t worry, it has never happened to me and it’s not going to happen to me.”

“Okay,” Harry told her, pleased, and turned back to his food. Hermione on the other hand, kept a close eye on Mia – there was something going on with Mia and the new guy, despite the fact that

he had just arrived today. She needed to find out what was going on with her best friend.

“Looks like this year is going to be interesting after all,” Ron stated and everyone snorted into their food while Hermione and Mia rolled their eyes. They shook their heads and shared amused smiles.

Soon dinner was over and the prefects were taking the first years up to their common rooms. Harry, Hermione, Mia and Ron were walking at a lazy pace, just enjoying their first night back.

“How do you think the year will end?” Ron asked curiously and Mia shrugged.

“Well, Moody will leave – definitely, the way things have been going, as there’s no reason for the DADA curse to end,” Mia told him.

“Let’s just hope that nothing dangerous will happen this time and we can get through the year just fine,” Harry told them.

“Bed time guys,” Percy informed them as he walked up behind them but Mia stopped.

“Hey, I need to have a talk with you mister,” Mia informed him. Percy just looked at her before walking away and putting some speed in to his steps. “Oh, you’re not getting away from me that that easily!” Mia called after him and started to chase after him.

“Does anyone want to tell me why Mia is chasing after Percy?” Ron asked and Hermione grinned as she looked at Ron.

“She’s fed up with Percy being secretive and watching us, so she decided that she’ll get his take on everything that’s happening. But Percy has told us that he needed more time to gather more evidence. You know Mia, though - she’s like a bulldog clinging onto a bone,” Hermione told Ron, who snickered at her description of Mia.

They reached the portrait and Seamus hid behind Harry. Harry turned his head in confusion and Seamus rolled his eyes.

"I don't want her to start singing again," Seamus told him and Harry smirked, rolling his eyes in amusement as he turned back to the front and once again faced the Fat Lady.

"Password?" The Fat Lady asked.

"Balderdash," Harry informed her and she smiled.

"Correct," she informed him before opening the passageway and everyone walked in and started to head up to their beds.

"Do you think Mia will get back in time?" Ron asked curiously and Hermione grinned.

"It depends on how long she'll be chasing Percy for and how long it will take her to get the information," Hermione informed him before she turned to the first years. "First years," the first years turned to her. "If the girls will follow me and the boys follow Harry, we'll take you up to your dorm rooms."

"How long do you think it'll take for Mia to break Percy?" Ron asked Harry, who shrugged.

"It depends on how tough your brother will be – if he is determined to get more evidence first, she might not be able to break him but if she presses his buttons enough, he'll crumble," Harry told him, thinking back to all the times Mia could wrap him, Draco and the family around her pinkie when she wanted something.

"Boys," Hermione cut in and they looked at her. "Can you take the first year boys up to their room, please? And do keep the noise down!" she pinned them a glare before leading the girls up the stairs while Ron and Harry lead the boys away.

"So, are you still sure you want to date her?" Ron asked Harry, who just shot him a smirk.

"Why not?" Harry asked. "She's more than enough woman for me." Ron coughed out what sounded like 'Whipped' to the younger boys, causing them to giggle as the elder boys brought them to their dormitory and opened the door and allowed them to go in.

“If you have any problems, just ask one of us – don’t worry if you have a nightmare or feel a little homesick. Someone will be downstairs if you want to talk,” Harry assured them and the boys nodded before Harry closed the door, leaving them alone.

Harry and Ron made their way up to their own room and they grinned when they saw the rest of the boys were already in the room, bouncing about.

“Oi, guys!” Ron called out and they looked at him. “Let’s not make too much noise this time. I still haven’t gotten over the curse that Hermione used on us last year!”

All the boys shuddered as they remembered that. Hermione had cast a spell on them that gave them a hangover the next morning and got all the girls to make as much noise as they could just to prolong the boys’ agony even more.

Harry grinned as he watched everyone settle down before grabbing his pyjamas and settled in his bed as he watched the others exchange stories of what they had done over the summer.

Harry couldn’t help the sense of peace that washed over his body. He was home again.

TBC

Chapter 5: Classes, Teachers and Trouble.

“Ah, first day of school, how much I hate you,” Mia sang as she made her way into the common room. Hermione snorted into her book with suppressed laughter. Harry just rolled his eyes at her.

“Mia, I’m sure it won’t be that bad,” Harry informed her, but she just shot him a disbelieving look.

“We’re at school,” she informed him and Hermione grinned behind her hand at Harry’s annoyed expression.

“Come on, breakfast!” Ron exclaimed as he came down the stairs and arched an eyebrow when he saw Harry and Mia glaring at each other. “I miss something?” Hermione grinned as she got off the couch and rounded it to wrap her arm around Harry’s.

“Mia’s just not happy about being back here,” Hermione informed Ron as they all moved toward the doorway to leave the common room and head down to the Great Hall.

“Why am I not surprised?” Ron asked as he and Mia followed them. Mia elbowed him in the stomach. “Hey!” Ron exclaimed, wounded. “I’m on your side!” he turned back to the other two. “We’ve never exactly had good years here yet, you know.”

“We know,” Harry told him before sighing. “But we can’t complain about school all the time – we don’t need the Ministry getting on our back even more than before.”

They made their way down to the Great Hall and sat down at their table as they got their breakfast – some students fighting over who were getting what.

“So,” Lavender spoke up and Mia looked at her. “Have you changed your mind?”

“Changed my mind about what?” Mia asked and Parvati rolled her eyes.

“About the dreamy Hunter?” Parvati reminded and Mia rolled her eyes.

“Oh god please lay off it – I’ve told you. He’s a bad boy and I’m not interested in them!” Mia reminded them and Lavender sighed.

“Oh come on Mia – he’s a babe,” Lavender told her and Mia smirked.

“I didn’t say I didn’t think he was hot – I just said I wasn’t interested,” Mia reminded them before she tucked into her breakfast.

“Time tables,” Professor McGonagall called out as she moved closer to her students' table. Everyone looked up. “Miss Granger!” Hermione stood up and took both her timetable and Harry’s. Hermione handed Harry’s his and they both started comparing. “Miss Black,” McGonagall called out and Mia stood up and reached over to take her timetable and she looked it over before breaking into a wide smile.

“Oh yes!” Mia cheered, causing her table to look at her. “We have Care of Magic Creatures today! And no potions!”

“Alright,” Ron cheered as he grabbed his timetable only for his and Mia’s smiles to fall when they saw what class they also had today.

“*Divination*,” they both whined at the same time, causing Harry and Hermione to laugh together.

“Students!” McGonagall exclaimed and they both looked at her with puppy dogs' eyes. She glared at them before she pinned another glare on the twins, who had their mouths open to speak. “And NO bets!” she informed them.

“Aw!” the twins complained but McGonagall shook her head.

“No, I do not want complaints from Professor Trelawney that students are mocking her class,” McGonagall informed them, sternly.

The fourth years snorted into their food and drinks at the memory of last year while the first years asked about what had happened.

Soon everyone had their timetables, so they all packed their bags and finished off their breakfasts. There was quite a bit of loud discussion among the students but it calmed down under the glare of Professor McGonagall. As the breakfast hour wound down, bands of students made their way out of the Great Hall to start the day.

Those who had it listed as their first class made their way down to their Care of Magical Creatures class, much to Mia's excitement. She was busy asking everyone what they thought they were going to be studying first while Harry and Hermione walked slowly behind the group.

"She's excited, isn't she?" Hermione asked and Harry grinned.

"Yeah – I'm just glad that Hagrid is still the teacher after the whole fiasco last year," Harry told Hermione, who nodded in agreement.

"Tell me about it," Hermione told him before she frowned and looked at Harry. "Hey, where is Buckbeak?" Harry grinned.

"He is staying at one of the Black's houses – the house elves are taking care of him. That way we don't have to place a charm on him to hide him from the neighbours," Harry explained.

"Bet Sirius just loved that," Hermione told him with a laugh and Harry chuckled.

"He said that we ought to move to the wizarding world and open up a petting zoo the way everything is going," Harry told her and Hermione laughed.

They finally reached the class and saw Hagrid pulling out crate after crate. Some of the crates rattled and gave off strange noises, which had Mia on alert.

"What are those?" Mia asked nervously, causing Harry, Draco, Hermione and Ron to look at her in shock as they noticed the trace of fear in her voice. They also looked toward the crates with a bit of fear on their own. If Mia was scared of it – then it meant it could be really bad.

“Blast-ended skrewts,” Hagrid informed them proudly and Mia closed her eyes as she took a step back and hid behind Harry.

“Mia?” Hermione asked in concern and Mia looked at her best friend.

“Some of them have explosive ends – you can end up with burns. Others have pincers instead,” Mia explained before shaking her head. “I was hoping I would never have to deal with them either in class or in life.”

“That bad huh?” Ron asked only for his eyes widen along with the rest of the class as Hagrid opened the crate to reveal truly ugly looking creatures. Half of them had strange looking pus-filled ends, while the other half had pincers on its ends.

“If you touch the ones with the pus, it will explode and give you degrees of burns,” Mia warned them and everyone took a step back, unwilling to go near the creatures. Hagrid, of course, didn’t notice and continued.

“Now, if you all will come closer – I’ll give you each a bucket of food. As I don’t know what they like to eat, we need to work our way through it,” Hagrid told them. That was enough to set Hermione on edge as she clutched at Harry’s hand, fear evident on her face.

“What if they like humans?” she hissed to him. Harry just shook his head, obviously in the same situation as Hermione. He understood that Hagrid liked dangerous animals but it would be nice if Hagrid had some idea of what the animals liked to eat before bringing them to class for them to feed!

“Let’s just hope that nothing happens,” Ron told them as everyone edged closer to creatures until one of the pus-ended one erupted with some dangerous oozing pus and caused the girls to squeal and back off. The boys faced each other before giving out a slow, suffering sigh as they moved closer to take up the slack that the girls had left and continued on with the class.

Soon, though of course it seemed much longer, class was over, much to the relief of everyone.

“Poor Seamus,” Mia murmured with concern as she watched as Ron takes Seamus up to the hospital wing. He had worked with a pus creature and it had erupted over his arms, leaving burns all over them.

“Madam Pomfrey will be able to fix him up – hopefully,” Hermione told them as she brushed her robes subconsciously. She winced when she saw a singed corner at the edge. When they left Hagrid had still been trying to put the creatures back away in their cages after he dismissed them.

Harry and Mia made their way up to Divination after dropping Hermione off at her Ancient Runes class. Mia wasn't happy with the fact that she had to deal with the old bat on her first day of class.

“Divination – can someone tell me why I took this class again?” Mia asked and Harry rubbed her back.

“Don't worry – just one more year of this and you can chose something else,” Harry promised her and Mia sighed.

“I can wait that long,” she told him before grimacing. “If she doesn't keep going on about your death this year.” Harry winced.

“How many deaths can I seriously die any way? I mean, you can only die once,” he noted. Mia simply arched an eyebrow and he nodded, amending his statement. “Okay, so maybe some of those could actually happen.”

They reached the ladder and Harry went up first with Mia climbing up after him. They headed over to their seats and Harry was surprised to see that Ron was already sitting down.

“Excited about class were you?” Mia asked and Ron threw her an annoyed look.

“Actually I was hoping that if I got here early, that class would go by quicker,” Ron admitted. Mia was about to retort when Professor Trelawney came out and greeted her class.

“Welcome back my class – today, we will be doing more tea reading,” she told them all before her gaze rested on Harry and a look of pity

crossed her face. "I fear that there will be death among this school before long."

Harry's head just dropped onto the table, groaning as he asked himself why he had taken the class again.

Divination was finally over – much to Harry's relief. He had decided right there and then that he was NOT going to take the class next year – there were only so many predictions of death or doom a boy could take.

Lunch was also a quick event and soon everyone found themselves heading for their next class – which, for the fourth year, was Defence Against the Dark Arts.

"I told you to drop that class," Hermione informed Harry after hearing him complain about his Divination experience. Harry looked at her.

"Hermione – the only reason you were able to drop the class was because you walked out of it and had the extra classes. I can't just take up another class a year too late – I have to wait until next year before I can chose something else," Harry reminded her but Hermione was persistent.

"Why don't you just talk to Professor McGonagall and ask her to move you to another class? You already have most if not all the knowledge you'd need in the class I'm taking – you could take almost any class on!" Hermione informed him.

"Hermione, I don't want to ask for special treatment... who knows what they would want me to do in return? It's better off that I work in the system as it is," Harry told her and Hermione sighed as they entered the classroom and nodded.

"Fine," she told him and Harry grinned as he watched her go off to her seat before sitting down at his table.

Harry and Ron took up their table together while Hermione was sitting one table down and to Harry's right. Mia was sitting one table up, still to Harry right, but behind him. Draco was sitting at the table to Ron's left as they watched their teacher limp into the room. His wooden leg

clunked with each step as he moved over to the black board and picked up a piece of chalk.

“I’m Professor Alastor Moody, and I’ll be your Defence Against the Dark Art teacher this year,” he informed them as he wrote his name on the board before turning around to face them. “Now, I won’t be sticking with the easy stuff. We’ll be going straight into the dangerous spells.” He looked around. “Can someone give me one of the Unforgivables?”

Draco’s hand went up into the air and everyone looked toward him. “Yes Mr. Malfoy?”

“My father told me of this curse – the Imperious Curse,” Draco informed him before smirking. “He claimed that Voldemort used the spell on him.” Moody smirked.

“Yes, and I understand it got him off,” Moody informed him before he turned back to the board and wrote down the Imperious Curse. “This is a curse used for controlling others. It allows the caster to control a person for a large amount of time – depending on how weak the person is and how strong the controller is. A large amount of the Dark Lord’s followers claimed that they were under the spell after the last war.”

Everyone watched him intently as he finished speaking. He looked around before he walked over to a jar that held a spider in it and picked it out. “I’ll show you how it works.” He placed the spider on the table and pointed his wand at it. “*Imperio*,” he commanded and the spider shivered before it straightened. “I could make her tap dance,” Moody informed the class as he made the spider jump from one table to another, causing chuckles.

“Or even make her jump down your throat.” The spider landed on Ron’s chest, causing him to freak out and everyone to laugh harder. “Or even bite you.” The spider landed on Draco’s head when Moody decided to bring the play to an end. “Or make her jump out of a window.” The spider thumped into the window.

Everyone's laughter ceased abruptly when Moody told them this. "Or how about I drown her?" he moved the spider move to the barrel of water and hovered it over the water, causing it to freak out.

He looked around the class and noticed with silent satisfaction that they were all quiet. He brought the spider over to his hand and looked around the room for a new victim as he moved over to the tables.

"What's the next spell?" Moody asked he moved over to Neville. Mia noticed a strange glint in his eyes and understanding dawned on her. She had to stop him before he asked Neville the spell.

"You shouldn't be allowed to use those spells in class – sure, they're what the Death Eater and Voldemort uses but you don't have the right to use them on children," Mia informed him as she stood up, facing their teacher off.

Moody raised an eyebrow before he walked over to Mia, eyeing her up and down before he came to the conclusion of who she was.

"Mia Black, the daughter of Callie and Sirius," Moody stated as he moved closer to where she was standing, refusing to back down. "Just like your mother you are."

"The next curse is *Crucio*, the worst. It takes extreme hate for the spell to work and the victim is put under extreme pain," Mia told him before placing her hand on his wand. "And trust me when I say, you do NOT want to use that curse in this class."

"Why not?" Pansy asked.

"Because some people here have been victims of the curse."

"So, they should be over it by now," Pansy informed her and Mia glared at her.

"Just try it," Mia warned with a kind of ultimatum. Moody just stared at her before he moved away. Mia sat back down at her place. Moody headed over to where Hermione was sitting and an idea came to his mind.

He placed the spider in front of Hermione, on top of the book before he looked down at her.

"Maybe you could give us the last curse Miss Granger," Moody asked. Hermione just shook her head as tears filled her eyes. Moody sat the spider down on the book. "*Avada Kedavra!*" Moody snapped and a green light shot out of his wand, instantly killing the spider.

Hermione closed her eyes as she turned her face to the side while Harry stared at the dead spider.

"The killing curse. Only one person has ever survived it, and he's sitting right here in this room," Moody informed them and everyone turned to look at Harry, who dragged his eyes away from the spider and glared at Moody.

"There is a reason those curses are unforgivable," Mia retorted and Moody looked at her with disdain clear on his face.

"You best off remembering that your mother was killed because of her meddling," Moody reminded and Mia tilted her head.

"Funny, I seem to remember that she was killed because Voldie and his lackeys couldn't keep their paws off Harry and his family," Mia informed him, causing him to look at Mia.

"You dare to disrespect Who He Must Not Be Named?" Moody demanded and Mia snorted.

"Voldie," Mia shot at him. "And he is nothing but a cowardly liar who was scared of a baby."

"He was the most dangerous pureblood to ever walk the earth!" Moody snipped and Mia smirked.

"Who the hell said he was a pureblood?" Mia asked as she picked up her bag. "It's pretty well known that his real name is Tom Marvolo Riddle and is a half blood thanks to his mum being a witch and his father being a muggle," she informed them as she shouldered her bag before leaving the classroom, leaving everyone stunned and staring after her.

Harry just leaned back in his chair and smirked at Hermione and Draco, who shook their heads and turned back to their books.

“Write the name of each curse down and write down what they do!” Moody snapped at the class before taking a swig of his drink from his flask. He was unnerved by Mia’s action in class. She wasn’t afraid of him.

“Well, that was a fun lesson,” Ron remarked as everybody walked out of class after being dismissed while Hermione sighed.

“Mia will get into trouble from Sirius – he told her not to pick fights,” Hermione informed Ron. Harry just wrapped an arm around her waist, holding her close.

“She’ll be fine. Mia just doesn’t like hearing about those curses,” Harry told her and Hermione nodded. Harry made a note to get her alone later.

“Where do you think she is?” Ron asked, looking around.

“She’ll be either at the lake or in an empty classroom,” Dean spoke up, causing the three of them to look at him shocked. Dean’s dark skin darkened with embarrassment.

“And how do you know that?” Hermione asked, incredulous.

“Seamus and I see her about whenever she gets in one of her moods – she prefers to be alone so we stay out of her way,” Dean explained before hurrying past them.

“Seems like everyone knows Mia better than we do this year,” Ron remarked, causing a scowl from Hermione and a suppressed chuckle from Harry.

“Honestly Ron,” Hermione started but Harry covered her mouth, cutting her off.

“Babe, he’s teasing you,” Harry told her. “Just ignore him.” Hermione arched an eyebrow at Harry at the term of endearment he had used

for her. Ron was eyeing Harry weirdly too, causing him to look at them curiously. "What?"

"You just called me 'babe'," Hermione informed him. Harry frowned before the conversation flashed back in his mind and he blushed slightly.

Ron grinned at them before he slipped away, leaving the two of them alone. Ron couldn't help shaking his head at Harry and Hermione. It was so obvious the two of them were totally mad for each other – now if they just opened their eyes and got together, the rest of the school could breathe a sigh of relief.

Ron made his way round the corner only to bump into a female body. Reacting quickly, he reached out and grabbed her arms, holding her up.

"I'm sorry!" he rushed out, apologising. The blonde looked up with dreamy blue eyes and she smiled absently.

"It's okay Ronald, no harm done," she told him in her soft voice. Ron's eyebrow shot up at the use of his full name and that the young female knew it.

"You know me? But I don't know you," Ron told her and she giggled softly.

"Luna Lovegood. I know your sister; we're in the same year," Luna explained as she played with her necklace. Ron couldn't help but be interested in it. It had butterbeer corks attached to them.

"That's an interesting necklace," Ron told her and Luna smiled.

"Thank you. It is quite easy to make – I could make you one if you wish?" she asked and Ron grinned. He couldn't help but be fascinated by this young woman.

"No thank you – I don't think I would wear necklaces that well," he told her and she nodded. She frowned softly in thought before a bright smile lit up her face.

"I know what I can do – but it would be extremely hard and very rare to find. I'll see you later Ronald - and do watch out for the little fairies. They like to make people fall in love with the wrong people," Luna told him before she walked off while humming a soft tune under her breath.

Ron just watched her go before shaking his head as an amused smile crossed his face. He had a feeling that Luna Lovegood was going to be one interesting person to get to know better before he continued his path to get back to the common room.

Meanwhile, Harry and Hermione were still standing in the corridor where Ron had left them. Hermione had her arms crossed over her chest as she continued to look at Harry, awaiting answers.

"Well?" she prompted. Harry sighed.

"Sorry, it was a slip of the tongue," Harry admitted. "I didn't even realise that I was saying it."

"Uh huh," Hermione told him, not believing him. She hid a grin as she continued to tease him and realised that she was enjoying it.

"Hermione," Harry whined and Hermione let out a happy laugh as she looped her arm around his.

"Don't worry, *babe*, I'm just teasing you," she informed him. Harry just shook his head. "Now, I want to run this idea past you..."

After being in the library for a couple of hours, Harry and Hermione finally made their way to the Great Hall for dinner. They smiled when they found Ron and Mia sitting at their usual spot, fighting over a plate of meat.

They moved closer to the table and sat down. Mia looked over and smiled when she saw them.

"Hey, you finally came to dinner – what took you so long?" She asked curiously and Harry rolled his eyes.

“Hermione has a plan thought out. She’s is going to be starting up S.P.E.W. and she’s roping me into it,” Harry told her and got a dig of an elbow into his side.

“I did *not* rope you in to it – when I told you my plans, *you* dragged me off to the library!” Hermione reminded him and he chuckled as they turned back to the other two.

“S.P.E.W.?” Mia asked, confused, and Hermione nodded.

“Yes, for the elves – we want them to start being treated fairly. We should start up a campaign to let the wizarding world know exactly how house elves are being treated,” Hermione informed them.

“For a minute there I thought you were plotting to free them,” Ron informed her and Hermione rolled her eyes at him.

“No – not all house elves are being treated unfairly. The ones who work here at Hogwarts and the elves at Harry and Mia’s house, for example. I just think that they should have certain rights to protect them,” Hermione informed him and Mia laughed.

“Besides, how do you think she would free them?” She asked Ron. “Knit hats and hide them under rubbish so they would be freed?” Ron snickered and Hermione smiled at Mia.

“Forget it. I can’t knit to save my life,” Hermione informed them. “Besides, house elves are quite smart – they would know if people were hiding clothes for them to be freed.”

“You’re right,” Harry told her. “The house elves wouldn’t be happy with that, so we’re better off just slowly gaining the house elves trust first before we go rushing forward about freeing them.” Ron nodded in agreement.

“Harry’s right too – you have to have at least a good idea of their background – because not all house elves are bred from house elves,” Ron told Hermione, whose eyes widened with interest.

“Really?” Hermione asked. She hadn’t found anything like that in the books she had seen so far but then again, there weren’t really any

books about House elves and she hadn't even found any pages on them either!

"I'll owl my dad and see if he can find information on them to pass on to you," Ron told her. Hermione nodded her thanks as she filled her plate with food. That topic covered, they started to listen to the general discussion going on around them.

"So what do you think will happen this year?" Dean asked and got groans from the students. "What?" he asked.

"Way to go Dean, you just jinxed us!" Seamus teased him as he clapped Dean on the back, who just rolled his eyes.

"I'm sure nothing bad is going to happen," Harry told them. "I mean – surely things have got to have a break every now and then."

"Don't be too sure," Mia informed her brother with an arched eyebrow. "Fates like to trick people at the last moment."

"Would everyone quit trying to jinx our year?" Ron hissed. "I would like to have a year that doesn't involve in someone either running for their lives or ending up in the hospital."

Mia just rolled her eyes as she tucked into her dessert and looked at Harry, who was looking at the paper that had arrived that morning. She saw that Harry was frowning.

"What's up?" Mia asked and Harry looked at her before sighing softly.

"It's this new reporter," Harry told her and Hermione leaned over his shoulder to look at the paper and rolled her eyes when she saw what he was talking about. It was a report on Fudge being the best minister that the wizarding world had ever seen. Her eyes roved down to the bottom.

"Rita Skeeter," Hermione stated before frowning. "I know that name."

"You should," Mia told her. "She was the one who did the report on the death eaters and that they accidentally killed each other."

“How did that work?” Ron asked as he leaned over. “I heard from dad that all the death eaters were scattered throughout the area – there is no way they could have killed each other.”

“The Minister is trying to keep the fact that any death eaters were killed low-profile at the moment,” Harry explained. “They don’t want people to know that they were killed by someone else, so it’s easier to put the blame on them killing each other.”

“Which is a complete and utter falsehood – they shouldn’t be allowed to do that!” Hermione complained, obviously angry at the lie.

“But we can’t refute it because we don’t have any evidence - and it’s hardly like they would listen to us kids anyway,” Harry told her. Hermione just continued scowling before she turned back to her dessert.

Later that night, once all the students were in their common rooms, three teachers met up in Dumbledore’s office for Professor Moody to tell them about his first classes.

“So, how was your first class with Harry?” Dumbledore asked from where he was sitting behind his desk.

“Interesting to say at the least. I got a tongue lashing from Miss Black about the curses,” Moody told them. Dumbledore arched an eyebrow.

“Interesting – so far it has looked like Sirius has taught and trained them well. Yet she has problems with the curses?” Dumbledore asked.

“That Black girl is interesting,” Moody informed Dumbledore and Snape snorted.

“You mean a pain,” Snape inserted while Dumbledore leaned back in his chair, linking his fingers together.

“She has potential, but she can go either way,” Dumbledore informed them while McGonagall looked in surprise at the headmaster.

“Personally, I think she is a delight – I’ve never had any problems with her,” McGonagall told them before narrowing her eyes at Snape. “Other than when certain other people issue detentions with her but refuse to supervise them!”

“She’s dangerous,” Moody informed them. “There’s something about her.”

“She’s protective,” McGonagall snipped to the man and he looked at her in shock at her vehemence. “She knows what the wizarding world is like and she’ll do whatever it takes to protect the family she has left.”

“If Voldemort was to ever see her, he would recruit her to his side. I’m not sure that Mia would be able to resist it – all that power...” Moody trailed off at the furious look that was now coming from McGonagall.

“Mia Black would never go to Voldemort’s side! He took away her mother and Harry’s parents! He was the reason why this burden was placed on Harry’s shoulders! Wherever Harry goes, Mia will follow *him*,” McGonagall informed him. “And I thank you not to insult my children!”

“Minerva,” Dumbledore started, but McGonagall wasn’t listening as she spun around to face each of the three men.

“You have to stop this!” she informed them as she turned to face Dumbledore. “Stop trying to control Harry and allow him to be who he is! If you stop trying to control him then Mia would be nicer.” She turned to face Snape. “And stop picking on them! Especially Hermione – Harry and Mia are both overprotective of her in part because she is a muggleborn! You were asking for trouble when you picked on her.” Finally she turned to face Moody. “And you – stop making everyone think that Mia will allow herself to go dark – she is a vibrant bright young girl who is a complete fresh breath of air!”

“Minerva!” Snape exclaimed in shock but McGonagall wasn’t finished.

“Those children are all a delight to this school, but you are hell bent on destroying them! Harry is an amazing young man despite the fact that he lost his parents at such a young age. He cares very much for

Hermione and Mia – he is a very accepting young man. Hermione is a delight – her dedication to knowledge and understanding in her course work is brilliant. Her big heart is even more of a delight. Mia is perfect – she is a mixture of Sirius and Callie – one I thought I would never see again. She tells it how it is and you don't like it because you know it's true!" McGonagall finished with a shout before she gathered herself back together.

The three men just stared at her, still astonished at what she said to them before she took a deep breath and let it out in a sigh. "And if you excuse me, I have to check on my House before retiring to my room." With that, she walked out of the Headmaster's office.

"Well, that was informative," Dumbledore stated, causing the two other men to look at him in surprise.

McGonagall stormed her way down the hallway, furious with the three men that she had left in the Headmaster's office. She couldn't believe how they were so willing to believe a vibrant young person would be so easily corrupted by the dark side.

She was walking so fast that she almost didn't hear the voices. Slowing down, she reached the corner of the corridor and looked around to see Harry comforting Hermione.

"Hermione, calm down," Harry whispered as he held her close and Hermione took a deep breath as she closed her eyes, resting her head on Harry's shoulder.

"When he used that killing spell on the spider – all I could think about was how it could have been you that night," Hermione whispered. McGonagall's eyes widened in immediate understanding.

"I could have killed him for placing the spider right in front of you before killing it – he must have known that it would have gotten to you," Harry told him as he rubbed his hands up and down her back, soothing her. "But you're not gonna lose me. I will do everything to make sure I'm around for a long time." Harry pulled away and Hermione lifted her head. "I promise." He rested his head on her forehead.

“I know,” Hermione told him with a soft smile. Harry leaned down and their lips brushed together just briefly when a sudden crack startled them.

Harry spun his head towards the disturbance and frowned when he couldn't see anything. Hermione looked in the same direction before sharing a curious glance with Harry.

“Come on, we'd better get back – apparently fate isn't on our side tonight,” he told her with a teasing tone at the end. Hermione blushed as she punched his arm before she linked hands with him and they walked off back to their common room, both equally disappointed.

“Oh Merlin,” McGonagall muttered to herself as she watched Harry and Hermione disappear. She had been hoping that the two of them would finally get together, but her heel had struck a small rock and caused the noise, breaking them apart.

Muttering under her breath, she made her way up to the common room, going slower this time because she wanted to make sure that all her students were there first.

She just didn't understand why Dumbledore was so determined to control Harry. He didn't need control. Didn't they know that by trying to control him that they were annoying Mia to the point that she lashed out at them just to protect him? That they were aggravating Hermione, who was also very protective of the young man?

It was right there and then that Minerva McGonagall fully committed herself to protecting Harry with everything in her power.

TBC

Chapter 6: Visitors, Surprise and Problems.

When it came time to make their way down to their Care of Magical Creatures once again, they did so with a sense of trepidation. They hadn't forgotten their last class and they weren't about to any time soon.

"Maybe one of us should talk to Hagrid about his lessons plans," Hermione suggested as she and Mia hung slightly behind the boys. Both girls glanced at each other before they looked at Harry, who just snorted at their implicit suggestion.

"Forget it - I'm not getting involved," Harry informed them. "If you want to sort out his lessons, talk to him yourselves." When they looked at Ron, he just put his hands in the air in another gesture of refusal.

They were making their way down from their next session of Defense Against the Dark Arts and found that Moody was focusing more on telling them about the spells rather than showing them. Harry, Ron, Draco and Hermione were quite relieved because they had a feeling that Mia would have seriously lost her temper if they had had to go through their first day again.

When they arrived at the paddock they say that Hagrid was pulling out fewer crates than before.

"Hagrid, what happened?" Ron asked hesitantly as he looked at the crates and Hagrid sighed.

"They got into a fight and it resulted in death for some of them," Hagrid told them, much to the relief of the students as Hagrid brought out a less dangerous animal.

It was cross between a mouse and a rabbit, much to the delights of the girls. It had soft black fur and a pink nose with bright blue or green eyes. That colour changed apparently depending on the mood of the animal.

Hermione couldn't help but grin at the animal that she was working with, a look that Harry noticed.

“What’s so funny?” Harry asked curiously and Hermione turned her smile to him.

“He reminds me of you,” Hermione admitted as she turned back to the animal, which just sat there and stared at her before moving closer and sniffing her fingers and rubbing its head against her palm. Harry rolled his eyes at Hermione, amused by her antics with the animals before he turned back to his.

Soon, class was over, much to the disappointment of the students, but Hagrid promised them that they would be able to come back and see the creatures any time they wanted. Harry got an idea with that statement about something he could do later.

As they made their way up to the castle they saw McGonagall standing in the doorway, waiting for the students to finish approaching her.

“Students, I want you to go up to your dorms and get changed into your best clothes,” McGonagall informed them, leaving them all staring at each other about what that announcement could possibly mean.

“What’s going on, Professor McGonagall?” Mia asked their Head and she sighed.

“We have visitors from the other schools coming today. You all must be on your best behaviour,” she informed them, sending Mia a pointed glare, which she took offence too.

“Why, when it comes to behaviour, everyone looks at me?” Mia complained, causing everyone to look at her with an arched eyebrow and she rolled her eyes. “I’m nice!”

“Kids – change, now!” McGonagall spoke up and everyone hurried up to their dorms so they wouldn’t risk the wrath of a teacher they all respected and feared.

So, everyone found themselves in the Great Hall. They all were freshly washed and had changed into clean clothes as they waited for these special visitors to come by whenever they were to come by.

Ron was getting a bit impatient because it meant they had to wait until the visitors came before they could eat.

"You'd think they would speed up a little bit," he grumbled, much to the amusement of the other students around them, who were used to Ron's attitudes when it came to food. Dumbledore stood up and the doors slammed open, causing everyone to look towards the Hall entrance.

A procession of girls came in, all dressed in a silvery grey cloak in a dancing pattern that had most of the boys swooning. Once they reached a certain point, the girls opened their hands and released butterflies that flew around them as they continued down the Hall.

Mia just watched the whole scene with a look of disbelief on her face before she shook her head as an extremely large female stepped into the Great Hall with the rest of the females walking beside her.

"Oh...man," Seamus started only to get a threatening glare sent his way by Mia and wisely kept his mouth shut.

"Madam Maxime!" Dumbledore greeted as he moved down to greet the female and kissed her hand.

"Albus Dumbledore, it was nice of you to invite us here for this occasion," she informed him and Dumbledore waved it aside.

"I hope you will enjoy your stay," Dumbledore told her before he led her up over to the head table and sat her down. The doors were slammed open once more, drawing everyone's attention to the entrance once again.

This time a group of men came in to the Great Hall in a much more angular dance while slamming their staves onto the ground, sending off sparks.

A tall dark haired male stepped into the Great Hall with a shorter male next to him. Ron grabbed Mia's sleeves when he recognised the boy.

"That's Viktor Krum!" Ron exclaimed, causing the Gryffindor table to look at him before they looked back at the Quidditch star with awe on

their faces. Harry stifled his laughter at this and Hermione rolled her eyes.

Mia just tugged her sleeve out of Ron's grip before she watched the men make their way towards the head table and finally settle down before she spoke.

"That is one big show off," Mia remarked into a sudden silence, causing the students from the other two schools to look at her and the table to bite back their sniggers.

"Mia," Lavender hissed, obviously embarrassed, but Mia didn't get the hint.

"What?" Mia asked. "They just came in here and started dancing – excuse me for not being impressed."

"Oh, Mia," McGonagall moaned as she covered her face before shaking her head in amusement.

"I'm sorry for not being entertaining enough for you," the dark haired male spoke up and Mia narrowed her eyes at the man.

"I know you... how do I know you?" Mia muttered to herself.

"Attention students!" Dumbledore called their eyes back to him. "Best behaviour," he reminded with a grandfatherly tone and amused glint in his eyes before he turned back to the man. "Welcome Igor," he greeted, causing gasps from Mia and Harry, who leaned over together – causing the rest to lean in, interested in hearing what they had to say.

"Wait a minute, Igor Karkaroff? As in the one who supported Voldemort but sold out nearly half of the Death Eaters to the Ministry in exchange for his freedom?" Harry asked.

"Dad is going to freak when he finds out that he is here!" Mia told Harry, who nodded in agreement.

"What's the problem?" Hermione asked, confused, and Harry turned to address her.

“Karkaroff was one of Voldie’s Death Eaters. When he was captured, he gave up the names of a lot of death eaters in exchange for his own freedom. A lot of those are currently in prison thanks to him, and they want blood,” Harry explained. Hermione winced as they sat back and watched the rest of the scene before Dumbledore turned to face them all.

“I’m sure you are all wondering what is happening. Well, this year Hogwarts is hosting a very special event – the Triwizard Tournament!” he informed them all and gasps of murmurs and excitement rose throughout the Hall. McGonagall tapped her glass to get everyone back under control. “The age to enter is 17 or over!”

This time, there were shouts of annoyance. The younger students weren’t happy about the age restriction. As the noise grew progressively louder, Mia got more and more annoyed as a slight pounding started up in her temple.

“WILL YOU ALL SHUT UP?” Mia shouted and everyone looked at her. “I’ve read about these contests. They actually cancelled it because of the death rate -, everyone who is seventeen and above knows more spells. This contest is extremely dangerous, so if you wish to die a very painful death, then be my guest,” she informed them and saw that they were all looking at her in amazement at what she had revealed while Harry covered his face in his hands.

“I knew it was a bad idea for her and Hermione to become best friends,” Harry moaned only to jerk to the side when Hermione elbowed him in the stomach. “I meant that in a nice way.”

“Sure you did,” Hermione informed him, not convinced at all. She turned back to others. “Mia is right. That was why the Triwizarding was cancelled.”

“As Miss Black and Miss Granger told you, the tasks ahead for the future champions of each school are very dangerous and injuries WILL be a part of the course,” Dumbledore told them before he turned grave. “I warn you all to be very careful before you make your choices. Once your name is called out to participate, there is no going back.” He clapped his hands, bringing everyone back to reality. “And now – dinner!”

Dinner appeared on the table and everyone launched into the food, desperate to assuage their hunger. Not long into the meal Mia noticed that the new boy kept looking over her way.

“What is it with that boy?” Mia demanded. “He keeps looking over here!” Everyone near Mia turned to see that Hunter was continually sneaking looks over at the table while Seamus shrugged.

“He probably fancies someone,” Seamus told her dryly when Neville snorted into his drink, causing them to look at him and he blushed.

“Sorry, it’s just...He *does* fancy someone from over here,” Neville admitted.

“Who?” Lavender demanded as she fluffed up her hair and Neville rolled his eyes.

“He’s been asking about Mia,” Neville told them and Mia's eyes widened before they narrowed intensely.

“What do you mean, he’s been asking about me?” Mia asked dangerously, and Dean rolled his eyes.

“Mia, it obviously means he’s interested in you and is asking around to get an idea of you first before he approaches you,” Dean told her. Mia just rolled her eyes.

“Why doesn’t he just ask me himself?” Mia asked and the boys choked on their drinks, causing her to narrow her eyes at them. “Well?”

“Oh come on Mia,” Fred exclaimed. “Any guy that comes near you ends up getting frostbite.”

“No they don’t,” Mia informed him, insulted, while Hermione winced as she touched Mia’s arm and drew her attention towards herself.

“Mia, you *do* have a habit of freezing guys out – the only ones you don’t freeze out are the boys here at this table and Cedric,” Hermione explained and Mia snorted softly.

"I think these guys are just making a bigger deal out of it than it is," Mia told them before she looked at everyone and doubt started niggling at her. "Do I really, though?"

"Sorry," the boys apologised, confirming their earlier statements. Mia sighed as she slumped down in her seat. "Hey, it's not a bad thing," Dean told her as he leaned over closer to her. "You just need to tone it down a bit. But the fact that Hunter is still asking about you indicates he really likes you."

"Right," Mia informed him before rolling her eyes. "Come on... why on earth would Hunter like me? He's the type of boy who would go for someone who takes care of herself and actually gives a damn about what they look like."

"And I'm telling you that you're wrong and that he likes you," Dean informed her and she glared at him, causing the twins to jump in.

"Okay, how about a small side bet?" Fred asked and they both looked at him. "If Dean is right, Mia has to do something for him. If Mia is right then Dean has to do something for her."

Mia and Dean looked at each other before turning to the twins.

"You're on," they both stated at the same time and Hermione covered her eyes. She had a feeling that this bet was going to blow up in everyone's faces in a bad way.

"You look like how I feel," Harry told Hermione, who shot him an exasperated look.

"Hey," Seamus hissed and everyone looked toward him and he nudged his head toward the Head Table. "Is it just me or does Hagrid seem smitten by Madam Maxime?"

Everyone's head spun around to look at the head table and they saw Hagrid was staring dreamily in Maxime's direction and Mia grinned.

"He's in love," Mia informed them and the girls sighed with delight while the boys rolled their eyes.

“How can you tell?” Ron asked and Mia grinned.

“Because we’re girls,” the girls all informed him at the same time. He shook his head and turned back to his food as everyone talked about what tasks could be in the tournament. After dinner was finally over they were all sent to bed.

A few days later Hermione was sitting in the Great Hall reading her book when she felt a cold shiver run down her back.

She looked up and saw Viktor Krum standing in the doorway with Igor speaking in low voices before another Drumstrang student hurried over and dragged Viktor away so that he could place his name in the Goblet.

Hermione frowned when Viktor looked at her before he placed his name in the goblet of fire before walking away. She didn’t know his look was, but there was something about the guy that just made her feel weird.

She turned when she felt someone sitting next to her and smiled when she saw that it was Harry.

“Hey,” she greeted. “What’s up?” Harry shook his head.

“Nothing really. Ron wanted to come down here – apparently something is going to happen so he wants to be here to see it. I saw you sitting here and decided to join you,” Harry explained and Hermione grinned.

“I’m glad you did,” she told him and he arched an eyebrow. “That Krum guy has been giving me the creeps lately, but I don’t know why,” she admitted and Harry nodded.

“He fancies you,” Harry told her and she gaped at him before laughing.

“Oh good one, Harry,” she told him but Harry just looked at her seriously in such a way that caused her laughter to fade as reality set in on her. “Oh, please tell me you are kidding!”

“Sorry, but he’s been asking about you,” Harry told her and Hermione groaned as she grabbed his jumper.

“You are not leaving me alone at any time – you hear me?” she demanded and Harry nodded as he touched her hands.

“Relax, Hermione. I’m sure he won’t do anything and even if he was, you can kick his ass no problem. If he still bothers you after that, I’ll deal with him personally,” Harry promised her and Hermione nodded, reassured as she let his lapels go before leaning into him.

They looked towards a loud commotion and saw that Cedric was being dragged over to the Goblet of Fire to place his name into it. Cedric shrugged at them before placing his name into the fire. As it went in the flame turned a bright blue, showing that it had accepted the name.

Everyone cheered while Hermione sighed.

“I’m so glad that you can’t enter the tournament yourself,” she informed Harry, who laughed and kissed her forehead.

“I have a feeling you would kill me yourself if I did,” Harry told her before running his hand through her long brown locks. “Trust me – I have enough danger in my life already without entering a dangerous tournament.”

“Did Cedric just enter himself?” a female voice asked and they turned to see Mia sitting down behind them.

“Yeah,” Hermione told her. “Did he not tell you?” Mia rolled her eyes as she grinned down at her best friend.

“Despite what you may believe, Cedric and I are not attached at the hips,” Mia reminded Hermione, who just grinned and Harry groaned.

“Come on girls, please,” he begged and they laughed at his reaction. The doors slammed open and the twins came running, each with a bottle in their hands.

"We did it!" Fred exclaimed and the students near them started cheering, leaving Harry and Hermione confused and Mia rolling her eyes.

"Did what?" Harry asked softly.

"The twins created an aging potion – they want to enter but because of Dumbledore's aging line, they can't get close enough to put their names in," Mia explained.

"But that won't help them," Hermione told Mia and Harry. The twins overheard this and looked toward her.

"What do you mean by that?" George asked and Hermione arched an eyebrow.

"Age lines are not fooled by potions and all that – they go by your body age and your brain - because it's ingrained on what year and date you were born. The line can tell when someone is faking it," Hermione explained.

"We will prove you wrong," Fred informed her and Harry raised his eyebrow at the statement.

"Prove Hermione Granger wrong? The smartest student to walk in Hogwarts since Lily Evans Potter and Voldemort himself?" Harry asked before shaking his head. "Not possible."

"You are such a great ego buffer to have around," Hermione informed him jokingly, secretly pleased with his praise and Harry shrugged.

"Just stating the facts," Harry told her and they turned back to the twins, who took their potions and jumped over the age line.

Everyone watched with bated breath for a moment and then let out relieved laughter when the twins weren't chunked out. The twins slapped high fives and placed their names into the goblet. Everyone watched to see what would happen.

The fire went bright blue before a loud bang came from the inner circle, sending the twins out and burning the papers that had their names on them.

Once their eyes were back to normal, everyone looked towards the twins and laughed when they saw that each of them were sprouting beards that rivalled Dumbledore's.

"Told you guys," Harry informed the twins as he shook his head in vindicated amusement. Meanwhile the twins started to blame each other for messing the potion up and started fighting.

Professor McGonagall came in at that moment - she had wished to speak to Harry about something - when she caught the boys rolling around on the ground.

"Fred! George!" she shouted, causing everyone to jump and the twins to stop fighting. Fred was on top of George with his hands wrapped around his neck and McGonagall took in their appearance before she planted her hands on her hips. "Hospital Wing, now! And detentions with me!"

The twins grumbled as they got off the ground and headed out of the Great Hall as McGonagall turned to Katie and Angelica and asked them to accompany the twins so that there wouldn't be any more problems.

Professor McGonagall let out a long sigh before shaking her head and walking right back out of the Great Hall, obviously forgetting what she had entered for in the first place. The remaining witnesses from Hogwarts just sniggered to themselves as the students from the other two schools just looked at each other, obviously not amused at the antics from the students of their hosts.

After the entry period was over, everyone gathered once again in the Great Hall and waited for Dumbledore to start outlining the procedure to select the champions.

Dumbledore moved closer to the Goblet of Fire and looked around at his students and those from the two other schools before he spoke.

“Now is the time!” Dumbledore called out and everyone turned to look at him. “Now we find out who will represent each school in the Triwizard Tournament!”

There was a buzz of excitement building as they watched the scene. The goblet’s blue flame flared higher and higher before it turned bright red, indicating it had chosen a participant. A loud roar came from the fire and a piece of paper shot out into the air before it slowly floated down to Dumbledore, who picked it clean and looked down at the paper before announcing a name.

“And the champion from Drumstrang is...Viktor Krum!” Igor clapped as Viktor stood up and punched the air. His school mates cheered, and Ron cheered as well, causing Mia to move away from his ear piercing whistle. “Yes, well done, Viktor. Now, if you please, head down into the back room,” Dumbledore told Viktor as he handed him the piece of paper and watched him make his way obediently into the backroom.

The goblet changed colour again and another piece of paper shot out and floated down. Dumbledore grabbed it and looked out over the students. “And the participant from Beabuxtons is...Fleur Delacour!” The girls cheered and Fleur seemingly sighed in relief before she hugged her friends and hurried over to Dumbledore, who handed her paper over and allowed her to go into the backroom.

The goblet changed colours for a third and final time, picking its last champion. Dumbledore reached for the paper and looked at it. “The champion for Hogwarts is...Cedric Diggory!”

Everyone at Hogwarts cheered. Mia just sent Cedric a look of pride but she couldn’t stop the niggling feeling that was now coiling up in the pit of her stomach. She brushed it off as being paranoid after everything that had happened to them over the years.

Cedric made his way over to Dumbledore, who clapped his shoulder and handed him the paper before Cedric made his way over the backroom.

“Now that all of our champions have been named, the tasks will begin shortly,” Dumbledore informed them and turned around to head up to the head table.

Dumbledore was about to move toward Snape when he saw that Snape’s eyes were fixated back towards the Goblet. Startled, Dumbledore spun around and saw that the Goblet of Fire was glowing brightly once again.

Dumbledore moved towards the Goblet just as it spat out another name into the air. Everyone stared in complete silence as it floated towards Dumbledore, who grabbed it and looked at it carefully before his face paled.

“What’s going on?” the whispered murmurs ran around the Great Hall. Everyone was confused about why there had been a fourth selection.

“Did the Goblet just spit out another piece of paper?” Mia whispered to Ron, who nodded at her.

“Yeah,” he told her before agreeing. “I thought it should only spit out three.”

“It is – and that means we have a problem,” Mia told him as she continued staring at Dumbledore. His blue eyes were looking around the room like he was searching for someone.

“Harry Potter!” Dumbledore shouted.

Harry’s eyes widened in a mixture of shock and fear. Hermione gripped his arm as fear coursed through her body. Mia stood up in shock, while Ron just looked at Harry with fear in his eyes – it was no coincidence of what was going on.

Draco closed his eyes before he opened them carefully. His emotionless grey eyes landed on Harry – they were all going to have to be on their toes even more.

Harry slowly rose against the stares and silent accusations of all three schools and started his way to the front of the Hall.

TBC

Chapter 7: Trouble, Solace and Annoyance.

“Harry, you need to go,” Hermione whispered but Harry shook his head – he was convinced it was all one big nightmare. He had read what happened in various tasks of past tournaments and he didn’t want to go through it.

Sirius’ words from the summer kept bouncing about in his brain – this was a set up. But there was no way they could prove it.

“Harry Potter!” Dumbledore shouted again. Mia reached down and pushed Harry off the bench and shoved him in Dumbledore’s direction – she needed him to get a move on so that they could figure out what happened.

Harry stumbled over to Dumbledore. He couldn’t believe that this was happening to him. Wasn’t he in enough danger each year he came back to Hogwarts thanks to Voldemort? Someone else has to put him in danger?

He stopped in front of Dumbledore, who handed him the piece of paper. Harry took it and saw his name clearly written on it before he woodenly headed over to the backroom, just wanting to get it over and done with so he could wake up and pretend it was all a bad dream.

Harry stepped down in the back room where the other champions were being held so their teachers could come and explain to them what was going to happen.

They looked up and saw Harry standing there. Cedric frowned when he saw the pale look on Harry’s face and the slightly wild eyes.

“Harry?” Cedric asked as he moved closer to the younger boy before he saw something in Harry’s hands. He reached out and gently tugged the paper out of Harry’s grip only for his eyes to widen when he saw Harry’s name on it and realised what must have happened.

“What’s going on - do they need us back outside?” Viktor asked but Cedric shook his head for Harry.

“No, he was named a champion as well,” Cedric told them, speaking for Harry when Dumbledore came rushing in and grabbed Harry’s shirt, shaking him.

Meanwhile, outside, Snape was about to enter the backroom after the rest of the adults when three people came rushing over to the door. He sneered at them as he blocked the doorway to prevent them from entering.

“Where do you three think you are going?” Snape asked and Hermione gaped up at him.

“To protect Harry from your abuse!” Hermione informed him before they simply pushed past him and made their way into the backroom.

They stopped short when they saw Dumbledore shaking Harry by his shirt. Mia quickly moved over to them and pushed her way in between them. Dumbledore took a step back when he saw the dangerous glint in her eyes as Ron and Hermione slid next to her, all three of them protecting Harry.

“You three shouldn’t be in here!” Crouch informed them but Mia just ignored him.

“Harry isn’t going to enter the tasks,” Mia informed Dumbledore with a deadly tone to her voice.

“He shouldn’t have been picked in the first place!” Madam Maxime demanded.

“One must wonder how Potter got his name into the Goblet,” Snape informed everyone and Harry lost it.

“Oh sure – blame me,” Harry remarked, causing everyone to look at him. “That’s the highlight of your day – blame me for everything that went wrong and hope that it will actually stick – what? I don’t have enough problems in my life that you need to make it seem like I’m asking for everything?”

“Mr. Potter!” Crouch uttered, scandalized but Moody waved his hand, telling the man to be quiet.

“Potter, despite what you may believe, my life does not revolve around you,” Snape sneered at him and Harry snorted.

“Excuse me if I don’t get that impression – you want to blame me for everything that goes wrong – why? Does it make you feel like a better man? Next time, quit using me to take the spotlight off your soul!” Harry snapped, causing Dumbledore and Snape to share a brief quick look at each other before they looked at Harry, hoping that no one had seen them.

But one person did – Hermione, who frowned, wondering what had startled the two men.

“He could have easily confunded the cup,” Karkaroff informed everyone and Mia snorted.

“It takes extremely dark magic to confound a cup like that,” Mia remarked.

“She’s right, that one,” Moody muttered. “It’s not an easy thing to bewitch a powerful object like that. Someone went to a lot of trouble to put Harry’s name in it and to make sure it came out.”

“How would you know something like that?” Karkaroff demanded as he looked at Moody.

“When you chase after Dark things all the time, you figure some things out,” Moody retorted back before taking a sip from his flask.

“Why not just take Harry out of the Tournament – he’s only fourteen years old and it’s obvious that it’s a set up,” Ron told them. Dumbledore turned to Crouch for answers.

“What can we do?” Dumbledore asked Crouch, who just looked hard at Harry before sighing.

“The rules are clear - Harry Potter must complete the Championship,” Crouch told them. “He has no choice.”

“No,” Hermione snapped and everyone looked at her. “No, I refuse to let Harry go through this! He could die!”

“Hermione,” Harry whispered as he reached out and took gentle hold of Hermione’s arms with tears pooling in her eyes. She shook her head in disbelief. Harry just pulled her into his arms and held her close as she clutched the back of his robes, burying her face into his neck.

McGonagall spun around to look at the others after watching her two favourite students hold on to each other for dear life.

“There must be something you can do!” she exclaimed. “Harry is too young to go through this!”

“Sorry, but it’s a binding contract on his name. He has no choice but to compete,” Dumbledore told them. Hermione just held onto Harry tighter.

“So, anyone could write Harry’s name and not get into trouble?” Mia demanded. “What the hell are you guys trying to pull? This kind of stuff is ridiculous!”

“Miss Black,” Crouch started but Mia was on one of her rolls.

“Not to mention illegal – you are not allowed to have a binding contract based on someone’s name – it has to be based on his signature and that’s not Harry’s handwriting!” Mia informed them, throwing the piece of parchment at them.

“There’s nothing we can do!” Crouch demanded.

“Declare a tie – Harry and Cedric both come from Hogwarts and therefore, it’s null and void. Start the Goblet of Fire up again,” Mia informed them.

“It doesn’t work like that!” Crouch snapped; annoyed with this silly little girl who thought she knew everything.

“What?” Mia demanded. “Are you telling me that Harry has to compete – he’s fourteen years old for fucks sake!”

“Miss Black, mind your language!” Professor McGonagall snapped. She might be in agreement with Mia, but she wasn’t going to put up with foul language in her castle.

“Sorry Professor McGonagall,” Mia apologised before she took a deep breath and closed her eyes, counting to ten and hoping to God that she wasn’t going to punch anyone. “Harry can’t compete – he’s too young and this is too dangerous.”

“He has no choice,” Crouch snapped and Mia threw up her hands as she spun around to face Harry.

“You see why I never wanted to come back to this world?” Mia demanded and Harry nodded his understanding.

“Harry, come on mate – let’s go to bed. It’s obvious that none of the adults except Professor McGonagall actually care about your welfare,” Ron told him, disgusted with the adults’ reactions.

Ron couldn’t believe what was happening right in front of him and it sickened him that they would willingly allow a fourteen year old to participate – against the rules – without putting up any kind of fight at all.

“Yeah,” Harry agreed as he turned Hermione gently and all four of them walked out of the room, leaving the three champions and the adults alone.

McGonagall was walking after Dumbledore at high speed. She was determined to get Harry out of the situation he was in and she wanted to make sure that everyone knew about her displeasure with it as well.

“You have to get Harry out of this!” McGonagall informed Dumbledore as they made their way into the Headmaster’s office. “It’s far too dangerous!”

“One must seize the opportunity,” Snape informed them and Dumbledore nodded, getting the message. McGonagall looked at Snape for a moment till her eyes widened in comprehension and shock.

“What? Offer him up as bait? Harry is a human being, not a piece of meat!” McGonagall exclaimed. “Besides, I have no doubts that Miss Granger would try and kill anyone who dares to hurt Harry!”

“We have to play along with this plot – this could be our chance to finding out who did this to Harry,” Dumbledore informed McGonagall.

“Are you serious?” she demanded. “Harry has been in danger since he arrived back in the Wizarding World – You-Know-Who has been trying to get him! Are you seriously going to put Harry through this when he is a fourteen year old boy?!”

“One who has seen enough danger to learn caution!” Dumbledore shot back and she glared at him.

“He is forced to be cautious because of who he is! You-Know-Who killed his parents! He was orphaned at the age of one! Mia is a half orphan because her mother was killed at Voldemort’s hand too! Those children have been through too much for you to put them through this!” McGonagall informed the headmaster with an icy glare. “If you thought last year was bad enough – what the hell do you think this year will be?”

“This discussion is over!” Dumbledore snapped at his Deputy Head, causing her to take a step back in shock. “Harry is one of the champions, and we must now focus on learning who is behind this plot. Anyone could be the traitor, and we have to make sure that we do not startle them into making a fatal mistake.” Dumbledore lifted his wand and placed the tip of it to the side of his head. He pulled out a silvery strand and brought it down to a large bowl that had blue liquid in it already filled with similar silver strands.

The bowl changed as the new strand joined it and it turned itself into a picture of the parchment that had Harry Potter’s name written on it.

“We must be on our guard more than ever,” Dumbledore told them, leaving the other two staring at him in silence.

The next morning, Harry sighed as he made his way out of the common room. He wasn’t interested in going to the Great Hall to

have breakfast and was about to make his way to the kitchens when he saw Hermione walking towards him.

“Hey Harry,” Hermione greeted as she walked up over to him. He looked at her and noticed that she had a bundle of toast wrapped up in a napkin in her hand. “Why don’t we take a walk around the lake?” Harry smiled as he reached out and wrapped an arm around her waist. They both walked out onto the grounds to get away from all the gossip.

Mia, on the other hand, was coming from the library when she bumped into someone.

“Sorry,” she told them as she knelt down to pick up her books only for a hand to land on hers. She looked up and found herself staring in to the dark eyes of Hunter Wolfe.

“It’s no problem,” Hunter told her as he helped her pick up her books before handing them to her as they stood up.

“Thanks,” Mia informed him warily, which Hunter noticed, and grinned.

“You do realise that I don’t bite, right?” Hunter asked teasingly and she nodded, though obviously not letting her guard down. Hunter sighed. “You are one tough cookie to crack.”

“Yeah – considering the fact you’ve been asking around about me - excuse me for being a little cautious,” Mia informed him and Hunter sighed as he ran a hand through his locks.

“Yeah, I was hoping that you wouldn’t find out about that,” Hunter admitted and Mia arched an eyebrow at that.

“Why?” she asked. “If someone was asking about me, I have the right to know about it.”

“Look, it’s kinda complicated,” Hunter started and Mia nodded.

“Okay, let me know when it gets uncomplicated,” she informed him before walking past him and striding off, leaving Hunter staring at her behind before he snapped his eyes and shook his head.

“Not going there,” he warned himself as he walked into the library.

Harry and Hermione found themselves sitting at the base of the large tree that was next to the lake. Hermione was leaning into Harry as her head rested on his shoulder as they both stared out over the water.

They had finished their toast long before and were currently enjoying the calm silence together with nothing around to annoy them. Their moment was interrupted when a flash of white caught Harry’s eyes.

Looking up, he saw Hedwig heading towards him with a letter in her claws. Harry extended his arm and Hedwig circled the tree first before swooping down and landing on Harry’s arm, adjusting herself until she got comfortable.

“You got a letter for me girl?” Harry asked as he stroked her breast feathers. Hedwig hooted softly in pleasure and her eyes closed before Harry reached down and gently extracted the letter from her claws.

Harry, I’m worried about this. I don’t like the fact that someone put your name in the Goblet of Fire and that it’s now a magical contract based on your name. I will be coming up – keep a close eye out for anyone who may wish you harm. Keep an eye on Mia too.

Sirius

Harry read out before sighing. Hermione reached out and touched his shoulder in comfort.

“It’ll be okay,” she whispered. “It has to be.”

“Yeah, I’ve gotten out of tighter spots than this,” Harry half joked to her only for it to fall flat when he got a sad look in his direction. “I’ll be fine Hermione, I promise.”

“You can’t promise that,” she informed him softly and Harry sighed. He wrapped his other arm around Hermione’s shoulder while Hedwig moved up to Harry’s own shoulder and settled herself there.

"I know," Harry admitted as he rested his head on top of hers and they both stared out over the lake, wishing that the rest of the world was far away.

Harry was making his way to class. He was walking along the castle path and was about to enter the courtyard when a bunch of Slytherins stopped him at the doorway. Harry arched an eyebrow when he saw that Pansy was leading the group.

"What's the matter Pansy - can't pick on Mia so you decided to see if you could pick on me?" Harry asked, boredom filling his tone. Pansy flushed at the insult before she flipped her hair back and showed off her new badge.

"Like our badges, Potter?" Pansy asked and Harry obligingly reviewed it. It showed Cedric's face with the saying 'Support Cedric, True Hogwarts Champion' before it changed to Harry's face with the saying 'Potter stinks'. Harry arched an eyebrow.

"Boring and unoriginal," Harry informed Pansy, who gaped at him and Harry grinned. "Man, you purebloods need to get out into the muggle world more often – they are already three steps ahead of you on that."

He was about to brush by them but a new voice spoke up.

"Got a problem here?" a female voice asked and everyone spun around to see Mia standing there with her arms crossed over her chest. "Because if there is, well, let's just say that I'm good when it comes to fixing problems."

"No problem here," one of the Slytherins stated nervously and Pansy snorted.

"Oh please, she's just a half blood – she can't do anything to us," Pansy informed her group before she smirked at Mia. "She wouldn't dare."

"Interesting badge," Mia informed her, ignoring the dare. "Childish - but then again, what should I expect from a pureblood who can't even tie her own shoes?"

“You filthy little...” Pansy started only for Mia to wag her finger in her face.

“Uh, uh – if you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all,” Mia informed her, quoting the line from the Bambi film that Thumper’s mother had used on him.

“Cedric is the real Hogwarts Champion – you’d do well to stick by him,” Pansy informed Mia, who rolled her eyes.

“Hello – I know this is a little too much for your tiny brain to comprehend, but the Goblet of Fire was only supposed to spit out three names. It spat out four – so why don’t you do the math and wake up,” Mia informed her before she reached over and linked arms with Harry. “Besides, blood is thicker than water.”

With that, both of them walked off. But Pansy wasn’t going to allow her to get away so easily, so she whipped out her wand and pointed at Mia’s back only for a loud voice to make them all jump.

“OH NO YOU DON’T LASSIE!” a loud male voice shouted and everyone spun around to see a dirty brown ferret standing where Pansy used to be.

“Transfiguration,” Harry and Mia stated together as understanding dawned on them.

“Using your wand at someone’s back – what a cowardly thing to do!” Moody raged as he moved closer to the ferret, which was squeaking and squealing like mad.

Moody flicked his wand and the ferret started bouncing up and down on the ground with a hard thud each time it hit. After a few bounces, it stopped in the air and started spinning around faster and faster, almost making everyone dizzy just watching it.

Moody then flicked his wand and the ferret landed on one of the other Slytherins and slipped down the boy’s shirt, causing it to scramble as it fought to get out from its trap when a voice interrupted them all.

“Professor Moody!” a female voice cried out and everyone spun around to see Professor McGonagall bearing down on the group. “What are you doing?” She stopped next to Moody with her hands on her hips.

“Teaching a lesson,” Moody informed her as he continued to once again bounce the ferret.

“Teaching a less...” McGonagall trailed off as understanding dawned on her. “Is that a student?” she demanded.

“Yes Madam,” Moody informed her, incensing McGonagall even more.

“NO, NO, NO!” McGonagall shouted as she whipped out her wand and pointed it at the ferret, restoring Pansy. “We do not use transfiguration as punishment – you issue them detention and talk to their head of house!”

“Ah, I forgot about that,” Moody admitted as he scratched the back of his head before he grabbed Pansy by the collar and yanked her up. “Your Head would be Snape, wouldn’t it? I’ve been meaning to have a word with him.” And with that, he walked off, dragging an insulted and banged up Pansy behind him.

“Lovely,” Mia whispered to Harry, who just grinned.

“You do realise that Ron is going to kick himself for not being there, right?” Harry told her and Mia grinned back.

“We just won’t tell him then,” she told him and they both walked off laughing.

McGonagall just stared after them with a light heart. She was glad to see that Harry wasn’t letting anything keep him down for long. She had a feeling that he would need all the laughter he could get.

They were back in Potions class and Harry was about to start collecting his ingredients when there was a knock at the door.

“Come in!” Snape barked and the door opened to reveal Colin Creevey standing in the doorway. “Yes Mr. Creevey?”

“The Headmaster requests Harry Potter in the Great Hall for photographs,” Colin told Snape, who sighed.

“Fine Potter, leave your bags and supplies – you’ll catch up when you return,” Snape informed Harry.

“Actually, Harry is to be excused from his class – he won’t be coming back,” Colin jumped in and Snape sneered at the young man.

“Fine Potter, you have homework – take your stuff and get out of my sight,” Snape informed him. Harry sighed as he grabbed his stuff before shooting a look at Hermione, who gave a small nod, understanding what Harry wanted.

Harry left the Potions lab and looked down at Colin as they made their way out of the dungeons.

“What does Dumbledore want me for?” Harry asked.

“You have a photo-shoot and wand weighing,” Colin informed Harry, who let out another sigh before shaking his head.

“Great,” He muttered as they arrived at the Great Hall.

“I’ll catch you later Harry,” Colin told him before he left Harry standing at the entrance. Harry looked up at the doors for a moment before he pushed one of the doors open and stepped in.

Looking around, he saw Cedric standing off to the side. Cedric looked his way and shot him a small smile. Viktor Krum and Fleur Delcour also looked his way but didn’t show any reaction. Obviously they weren’t happy that a fourteen year old has to participate in the Tri-Wizarding. When Harry moved closer to Cedric, Ollivander stepped into the room after Dumbledore, Crouch and the other two heads.

“Is everyone here?” Crouch asked, looking around and smiled when he saw that all four of them were present. “Good – I have called you here for the weighing of the wands and photo-shoot.”

“If you all would please get your wands out and hand them to Ollivander so he can look at them?” Crouch ordered. Harry brought

out his wand, grateful that he had gotten the wand cleaning kit and cleaned his wand every morning – Hermione had lectured him on the cleanliness of a wand.

“A clean wand means a wand that will work properly,” she had informed him. Harry shook his head to come back to reality when he heard Ollivander calling his name.

Harry handed his wand to Ollivander, who took it and shot Harry a secret smile before winking.

“Harry’s wand is in perfect condition,” Ollivander told the others before handing Harry his wand back. Harry took it and placed it into his front pocket when all of a sudden the doors slammed open, causing everyone to jump slightly.

A short blonde woman stepped in. She had on dark red lipstick and she wore strange glasses. She had on a dark green suit while a crocodile handbag scuttled after her. She was holding a long quill in one hand and a notepad in another and a photographer chasing after her.

“Who are you?” Cedric and Harry exclaimed at the same time before they looked at each other and then back at the new visitor.

“Rita Skeeter!” Rita exclaimed before she smiled brightly at the champions. “And those are our new champions?”

“Yes, they are,” Dumbledore informed her and Rita clapped her hands together before snapping her fingers and her photographer came forward.

“Let’s take a picture of our wonderful champions together!” Rita told him and he nodded as he set up the camera.

Harry sighed as he crossed his arms as Rita and the photographer started fighting over who was to sit in the chair in front and where the others would stand.

After the fifth time of moving them about, Harry lost his temper.

“Just take the goddamn picture!” Harry snapped. “I have better things to do with my time than stand around here and act like I’m happy being forced into this stupid game!” Rita’s face lit up when Harry said this and moved closer to him.

“Harry, mind if we have a little talk?” Rita asked and Harry scoffed.

“Yes, I do mind – I’m not talking to any reporter who thinks Fudge is the best thing since chocolate,” Harry informed him. “Besides, I’m busy. I do have an education to attend to.” With that, Harry walked quickly out of the Hall, leaving the rest of the champions and Rita stunned - though Cedric and Ollivander were staring after the young man with an impressed smirk on their faces.

TBC

Chapter 8: Sirius, Papers and Shocks.

Harry yawned as he made his way into the Great Hall and saw that Hermione was already sitting at the table. He moved over and sat down next to her before piling his plate up with breakfast.

"Morning," Hermione greeted as she handed Harry a glass of pumpkin juice, which he took with a thankful smile.

"Morning," Harry replied before looking around. "Where's Mia?" Harry asked.

"She's still sleeping in – as it's a weekend." Hermione explained as she flipped the paper open. Harry looked and grimaced when he caught a picture of him all by himself.

"Why are you reading that?" Harry asked when he recognised the biography of his life. The newspaper had put it in along with stories about the other champions so that everyone would know about them and their backgrounds.

"Because it's interesting in hearing about your life the way they think it was," Hermione informed him, not once looking up from her reading.

Harry just grunted as he turned back to his food. He was forced to look away from it almost immediately however when Hedwig swooped down and settled herself on the table in front of Harry with a note tied to her leg.

"Hey girl," Harry greeted as he reached out and stroked her breast feathers before gently removing the letter from her and handing her a strip of bacon.

Hedwig nipped his fingers before taking the bacon and flying off toward the owlery where she could rest from her journey.

"Who's the letter from?" Hermione asked. Harry looked at the handwriting.

"Uncle Sirius," Harry told her as he opened the letter and pulled it out to read.

'Harry – Remus and I will be making our way down to Hogwarts just before the first task – take care and remember all your spells. As each tournament has different tasks each time, you never know what you will find yourself facing, but remember the accio spell the most – you might need your broom nearby.'

Harry – just be careful, I beg you, and watch out for anyone who may seem suspicious. I don't like the fact that Igor Karkaroff is there, knowing that he is former Death Eater.

Now - on to more news – Peter has escaped!'

"What?" Harry demanded, causing everyone to look at him out of shock. Hermione looked at him curiously too.

'You and I both know that this is no coincidence – with the attack at the World Cup with the death mark in the air. And with the Triwizarding starting up again, I fear that Voldemort may have found a way to sneak his way in all the confusion... so be on your guard and find out what the tasks are in advance so you can prepare yourself. Sirius'

"Harry?" Hermione asked.

"Peter has escaped," Harry told her. Hermione dropped her papers out of shock as she gazed at Harry.

"What? How?" Hermione demanded. Harry shook his head.

"Uncle Sirius doesn't say, but he does say that it's not a coincidence. Hermione – something bad is gonna happen," Harry told her.

"God," Hermione murmured as she rubbed her forehead, obviously gaining a headache. Harry reached out and rubbed her back. Hermione turned to the paper once more and let out a small gasp when she reached a certain point.

'We got to meet our four champions yesterday, and already one can see that Harry Potter is scared to death about the upcoming tasks,'

“What are you on about?” Harry demanded. He didn't have any idea where the paper had gotten that information. Hermione just waved her hand at him as she continued to read the paper.

‘It is well known that Harry Potter, also known as the Boy Who Lived, has a huge taste for adventure and would like nothing more than to win the triwizarding cup,’

“Didn’t know that rushing about trying to save everyone’s life meant it was an adventure,” Harry muttered.

‘One must ask though, just what would Lily and James – the deceased parents of Harry - think of this action? We call attention to inspect Sirius Black's behaviour in the upbringing of the children as they seem to be particularly violent and love nothing more than a dangerous adventure.’

I asked several students to see what they thought of Harry being the fourth champion and got some surprising responses.

“Oh, Potter always needs to be the centre of the attention – along with that stupid girl of a cousin of his. They are always up to something. I wouldn’t be surprised if they plotted this from the beginning,” said Pansy Parkinson, a 14 year old Slytherin girl.

“Harry Potter has always walked like he was above us all...”
Hermione turned when she heard Harry sputtering and coughing. “Harry, are you alright?” she asked as she reached out and rubbed his back.

“Who the fuck said that rubbish?” Harry demanded and Hermione looked at the paper before sighing.

“Justin,” Hermione told him and Harry’s eyes hardened.

“What’s the bet that he said that just because I refused to accept his apology about being the Slytherin heir and said I'd be wasting my time in attacking him?” Harry muttered, darkly.

Hermione couldn't help the fond smile that appeared on her face as Harry angrily dove into his food.

“Harry, it’s just a paper – it’ll calm down sooner or later,” Hermione told him. Harry shot her a look of disbelief and she winced. “Okay – maybe later – way later.” Harry grinned as he kissed the side of her head.

“Thanks for trying to cheer me up, but I just wish I could get my hands on Rita Skeeter and strangle her – she’s only doing this because I walked out after she asked me for an interview,” Harry told her.

“What did you expect?” Hermione murmured rhetorically before she leaned her head on his shoulder and closed her eyes, wishing that it was just them and everyone else would go away.

Krum watched from a distance. He had seen how close Hermione and Harry were and wondered if he still had a chance in gaining a relationship with her. He frowned before walking off, looking back at his dwindling chances, when he bumped into Mia.

“Will you watch where you are going?” Mia demanded. “I know you all boys are taller than us, but you have to realise that us girls are around even if we’re smaller than you!”

“Sorry,” Viktor told her and Mia sighed as she rubbed her forehead.

“Actually, I’m sorry – I didn’t mean to bite your head off. Crappy morning and it doesn’t seem to be getting any better,” she explained before she shot a disgruntled look at someone behind him.

Viktor turned and saw a brown haired male from Slytherin and arched an eyebrow at Mia, wondering what he had done to tick Mia off.

“Mia,” the boy greeted. Mia just crossed her arms and shot him a cold glare that even had Viktor taking a step back.

“Hunter,” she greeted back coldly and Hunter grinned, obviously not fazed by Mia’s chilly attitude.

“I was wondering if…” Hunter started but Mia jumped in.

"Sorry, too busy," she informed him before brushing past them both, leaving Hunter and Viktor alone together. Hunter let out a small sigh before he looked at Viktor.

"Hey," he greeted. Viktor just nodded back before he watched Hunter walk off. Viktor shook his head as he looked at Hermione once more and wondered if it would be a good idea to go find another girl that didn't hang around with that crazy black-haired girl.

With this in mind, he walked out of the Great Hall and headed out of the castle so he that could head to the ship.

Hermione was startled back to reality when she heard a loud thud and clanging noises. When she refocused, she saw her best friend muttering under her breath as she slammed food on her plate with considerable force.

Hermione turned to Harry and found that he was staring at his sister like she had grown two heads. She knew that Harry didn't have a clue to what was going on either.

"Mia," Hermione attracted her best friend's attention. Mia looked up at her with an expectant look on her face. "What's wrong?"

"Wrong? Why would anything be wrong? Everything is just fucking peachy and lemony-squeezy," Mia told her in an aggravated sweet tone, causing both Harry and Hermione to arch an eyebrow.

"Probably because you're swearing and babbling - and you're attacking your plate with your food... and you don't even like scrambled eggs," Harry pointed out observantly.

Startled, Mia looked down at her plate and swore under her breath. She shoved the plate away and placed her head on her arms, which were crossed on the table.

"My life sucks," Mia told them.

"Welcome to our world," Harry and Hermione stated together, causing muffled laughter from Mia as she kept her face on the table.

“Does have anything to do with Hunter?” Hermione asked. Harry glanced at Hermione curiously before turning back to Mia. Mia lifted her head and made a face.

“That obvious huh?” Mia asked. Hermione frowned.

“What is going on with you two? You’ve been like this since Hunter arrived at Hogwarts,” Hermione told her and Mia sighed.

“I know the guy – don’t ask me how I know him, but I do. It’s making me nervous that he’s going around asking questions about me. With everything else that has been going on, it makes my hairs stand up on the back of my neck,” Mia explained.

“You think he wants to harm you?” Harry asked as he studied Hunter across the room. Try as he might, he couldn’t sense anything dangerous about the male.

“No,” Mia admitted. “He has had plenty of chances to do so but hasn’t done anything.”

“Do you like him?” Hermione asked. Mia looked at her best friend before screwing her face up.

“Hell no – the guy is arrogant, cocky and is too much of a bad boy to be trustworthy,” Mia informed her. Hermione arched an eyebrow at this.

“I think you are protesting too much,” Hermione informed Mia, who rolled her eyes.

“Trust me – I don’t like him. There’s something about him that just sets me on an edge,” Mia told her.

Hermione nodded before she stood up, taking her bag with her.

“Okay – listen, I have to go to the library to get some work done – I’ll see you later?” she asked and got nods from Harry and Mia before she left the Great Hall altogether.

Hagrid made his way over and bent down next to Harry.

“Harry, can you meet me at the edge of the Forbidden Forest before midnight tonight?” Hagrid asked. Harry nodded his agreement.

“Sure, why?” Harry asked but Hagrid shook his head.

“It will all be explained tonight,” Hagrid told him before he moved off. Harry watched him leave but turned to face Mia when he heard choking noises.

“Mia?” Harry exclaimed when he saw that she actually was choking on some food. Harry leaned over and patted her back until her coughing fit was over. “What happened?” Harry asked; only to notice that Mia was staring at the paper. “Mia, just ignore it.”

“Justin!” Mia barked as she looked over at the boy at the Hufflepuff table and also startling the students still having their breakfast.

Justin looked up to see who had called his name only to pale when he saw Mia glaring at him. “You and I are going to have a long chat about this rubbish you spouted to the Prophet. And you better give me a damn good reason for saying this crap or you’ll be spending the rest of the year in the hospital wing,” Mia threatened before she turned to Pansy. “Pansy – grow up! Quit acting like a five year old child and act the age you are!”

Pansy flushed with anger and embarrassment as some of the students sniggered. Mia got up and moved over to Justin to grab him by his ear and yank him out of the Great Hall altogether.

Everyone looked towards Harry, who shrugged, but with a small smirk that had made its way onto his face.

“What can I say? She’s very protective of me – they should be lucky that Hermione wasn’t here instead,” Harry told them before he got up and left the Great Hall himself in order to hunt down Mia and make sure she wasn’t dismembering Justin.

Later that night as midnight was ticking closer; Harry was exhausted from the day’s action. It had taken him over an hour to track down Mia, and she had still been threatening Justin very colourfully.

It had taken him a full half hour after that to calm Mia down and drag her out of the classroom only to bump into Professor McGonagall, who took Mia to her office in order to have her own talk with her.

Harry had never felt more thankful to his Head of House than he did then. He knew that Mia respected McGonagall and she would be able to help her out with some of her own problems.

Harry had also received a letter from Sirius, who had originally received a letter from Draco detailing Mia's behaviour at breakfast. Sirius had demanded to know what was going on with his daughter, and Harry made a mental note to tell Mia to talk to her father when he came up for the first task. He knew that Mia needed to talk and that Sirius would be able to help her.

After that, Harry had caught up with Hermione and she was clinging to him like mad. Harry found out that Hermione had been looking up details in past tournaments and each one had at least one death in it. Hermione was scared to death about Harry's well being and she had gone on a manic search for anything that would be able to help Harry with any possible dangers that could show up in the tournament.

So Harry had just traded one hysterical woman for another – much to Draco's amusement when he had shown up at the library for a clandestine meeting.

Both of them had managed to calm Hermione down by saying that they would use their elemental abilities whenever it looked like Harry was in true danger – they didn't care if it meant that he was breaking the rules or not.

Hermione had calmed down somewhat at that point and loosened her grip on Harry. Draco found her another book to research and keep her mind off the upcoming task, and that helped settle her down even more - much to Harry's relief.

Harry made his way over to the edge of the Forbidden Forest and waited for Hagrid to show up. He was dressed in his invisibility cloak, just as Hagrid had requested.

Near midnight Hagrid showed up, but Harry had to arch an eyebrow when he saw what Hagrid was wearing. His hair was slicked down and parted in the middle, and he was wearing a strange looking coat. It looked coarser than the other coat that Hagrid usually wore, and it bore a strange, very big, orange flower pinned onto one side. He also seemed to have put on a lot more cologne than he usually did – or was meant to.

“Harry, are you there?” Hagrid called out. Harry pulled the cloak down from his head and Hagrid jumped slightly when seeing that Harry was closer to him than he expected. “Good – now we just have to wait a few more minutes.”

“Hagrid, what are you wearing?” Harry asked about Hagrid’s outfit. Hagrid just blushed slightly and was about to reply when they heard a female voice call out Hagrid’s name – one that Harry recognised. “Oh Hagrid, I’m not helping you out on a date am I?” Harry moaned. “I’ve never been on a date in my life!”

“Sh!” Hagrid hushed before glaring at Harry. “And for your information – I’m not dating her!” Harry let out a soft snort at this before he pulled his cloak over his head, making him invisible once again just as Madam Maxime came through the clearing.

“There you are Hagrid,” she told him and Hagrid smiled at her.

“Olympe, you’re right on time,” Hagrid told her and she smiled back at him.

“Where are you taking me?” she asked him. Hagrid just grinned.

“It’ll be a treat,” Hagrid told her before he lifted his arm. Smiling, Madam Maxime took his arm in her own and they both headed off with Harry following them, rolling his eyes in the process.

They walked for a good half hour before they finally reached their destination. Harry watched as they came to a clearing and saw a bunch of wizards and witches running about four large crates.

“Hagrid, what is this?” Madam Maxime asked.

"This is the first task," Hagrid told her. Harry shot Hagrid a look of disbelief before he looked back to the crates. One of them broke apart and a dangerous looking dragon came into view.

"Oh, dragons!" Madam Maxime exclaimed as she moved closer.

"Dragons?" Harry demanded as he yanked the cloak down and glared at Hagrid, who turned around to face Harry, startled. "I'm facing dragons for the first task?"

"Sh!" Hagrid hissed before he hurried toward Madam Maxime.

"Oh, you have to be fucking kidding me," Harry muttered as he closed his eyes and took a deep breath, wondering how the hell he was going to tell Hermione about this without causing her a heart attack.

Harry sighed and took one last look at the dragons before he headed back up to the castle. He still didn't have a good idea on how to prepare Hermione for the upcoming battle.

Ron made his way into their dormitory and found that Harry was already in the room, lying on his back. His head was pillowed by his arms that were crossed behind him.

Ron could see a pensive look on Harry's face and wondered what had changed since he had last seen him at dinner.

"Harry, are you alright?" Ron asked. Harry just looked back, his expression a bit haunted.

"I have to face a dragon for the first task," Harry told him. Ron slumped down on the bed and stared at his best friend in a stunned silence before he shook his head in denial. "Charlie was there." Ron sighed.

"I'm guessing Hermione doesn't know?" Ron asked and Harry scoffed.

"How am I going to tell her?" Harry asked as he turned to face the ceiling. "She's already freaking out at the fact that I'm in the tournament at all – this would just push her over the edge."

"You can't let her go to it not knowing what to expect," Ron reminded him and Harry sighed as he nodded.

"I know," Harry admitted.

And so the next morning Harry found himself pacing the floor in front of the fire in the common room as he waited for Hermione to come back from the library. He raked a hand through his hair as he tried to sort out in his head how he was going to tell Hermione about the first task, but nothing coming to him.

Harry was about to turn around and pace some more when he heard the common room door open. He looked up to see Hermione making her way in past the doorway.

Hermione smiled when she caught sight of him standing there.

"Hey, were you waiting for me?" Hermione asked as she moved over to the table and placed her books and bag down. Harry nodded.

"Yeah, I have something to tell you," Harry told her as he moved over to her.

Harry took Hermione's hand and led her over to the couch. Hermione arched an eyebrow at him, not expecting something so formal.

"I know about the first task," Harry told her and Hermione perked up but with a coil of fear starting in her belly when she saw the graveness on Harry's face. Clearly it wasn't good news. "I have to face a dragon." Hermione's grip tightened on Harry's hand rather painfully as the fear started to show in her eyes.

"Are you sure?" Hermione asked. Harry nodded.

"Yes – Hagrid took me to see them last night – four crates each filled with a dragon. Kinda hard to miss the flames," Harry explained and Hermione closed her eyes as dizziness started to wash over her and she shook her head to clear it.

"That's too dangerous," she whispered. Harry nodded as he shifted closer and held her close to him.

"I know but you know I can't get out of it," Harry reminded.

"Do you know what you are going to do?" Hermione asked and Harry nodded.

"Yeah – I will be allowed to have my wand with me. I'll call for my broomstick and fly it to get past the dragon," Harry told her. Hermione just rested her head on his shoulder and just prayed to whatever powers were listening to look out for Harry.

Harry just kissed her forehead and held her close as he stared into the fire, hoping that everything will be okay.

TBC

Okay – I know this one is a little shorter than the rest and I apologise for this but it was needed. I promise you that the next one is a whole lot longer!

Chapter 9: Library, Jeers and First Task

Hermione was sitting at her normal table in the library as she looked through some books to forget about the upcoming task. It wasn't helping. She kept finding herself staring out the window at various periods before she would shake her head and bring herself back to reality.

She looked back down to her book, but the words blurred together and Hermione couldn't keep her concentration on the words. She sighed as she closed her book and then her eyes. She hated this feeling. She hated feeling helpless with Harry being in danger like this and she just wished that they had never brought the Triwizarding Tournament back.

Hermione opened her eyes suddenly when she felt eyes on her back. She turned around and found Krum's eyes once again staring into her. She shook her head and turned back to the front. The same thing happened all the time – she would be sitting at the table, reading, and he would just sit there and stare at her.

Hermione couldn't help but wish that Harry was sitting with her, comforting her, but he had something he needed to do.

Harry was making his way across the courtyard when he caught sight of Cedric and hurried over to him.

"Cedric, I need to speak to you," Harry told him.

"What? Are you going to cast a spell on him to knock him out of running, Potter?" one of the Hufflepuffs asked.

"Makes you wonder how he even entered in the first place," another one continued.

"Are you really that dense?" A cold female voice asked and they turned to see Mia standing behind them. "The Goblet of Fire was only allowed to pick three champions – it spat out four instead. Any person with an IQ would be able to realise that someone had confounded the cup. Therefore, they set Harry up because they want him to die."

"You're just saying that because Harry is your cousin," Pansy stated from behind her and Mia sighed as she rubbed her forehead.

"Why doesn't this world just go to hell?" Mia muttered to herself before she turned to face Pansy. "None of us were talking to you - so you don't need to be here."

Pansy looked at her with an affronted look on her face. She couldn't believe that a half blood would try and dismiss her.

"Do you have any idea who you are talking to?" Pansy demanded as she stepped forward. She faltered for a second however when Mia stepped forward too.

"To a pureblood who would love nothing more than to bow down and lick the shoes of a half-blood coward," Mia informed Pansy with a hard glint. "The same man who tried to kill a one year old baby because he was scared of him."

"He's more powerful than all of you put together," Pansy hissed and Mia laughed.

"Sorry – did he or did he not get himself killed by a one year old baby? This is a part that you all seem to be missing here – your little lord is dead, thanks to a baby. He wasn't killed by another wizard or witch the same age or older – he was killed by a baby," Mia repeated before shaking her head. "I knew that some purebloods could be thick but you take the cake."

Pansy lifted up her hand to slap her but Mia caught her wrist and clicked her tongue.

"I wouldn't if I were you – I tend to react very badly to being slapped by a coward. And I don't really want your filth on me," Mia informed her before she shoved Pansy away from her and turned around to face the boys. "Any more problems? Or can Harry talk to Cedric without you guys foaming at the mouth?"

"He can talk to me," Cedric stated as he grabbed Harry's arm and pulled him away from the group. "She's scary." Harry grinned.

"I grew up with her – I should know how scary she can be when she wants to," Harry reminded him as they reached a more private spot.

"What's up?" Cedric asked.

"The first task – its dragons," Harry told him. Cedric's jaw dropped.

"Are you sure?" Cedric demanded and Harry nodded.

"Oh I'm sure – I saw them with my own eyes. And trust me – if I don't make it out alive, Hermione will bring me back just to kill me again," Harry told him. Cedric couldn't help the small grin appeared on his face at the mention of Hermione.

"She and Mia would be a force to reckon with," Cedric stated and Harry shrugged.

"Hey, as long they can protect themselves, I'm happy," Harry told him before shaking his head. "I just hate having to be in this tournament."

"Thanks for telling me," Cedric told him but Harry waved it off.

"No problem. Besides, Madam Maxime knows about it too so she would have told Fleur - and I'm betting that Viktor knows as well," Harry told him and Cedric nodded as they made their way back to the others. When they arrived, they saw that Mia had pinned someone to the ground.

"MIA!" Harry shouted, startling the gathered spectators.

Mia had been about to turn away from the others after she watched Cedric and Harry walk away when a voice stopped her. She turned around to see that one of the sixth year boys had moved closer to her.

"Black," one of the males started as he moved closer. Mia just stood her ground. He wrapped a strand of her black hair around his finger as he moved his face down towards hers. "I wanna know – just how fiery can you be?" he teased before he laughed along with the other guys in his group.

“Oh don’t worry,” Mia informed him sweetly as she tugged her hair out of his hand. “You won’t be the person to find out.” The laughter ceased. The male’s brown eyes hardened in displeasure as he gripped Mia’s arm.

“What is that supposed to mean?” he demanded and Mia smirked.

“It means I’m not interested,” Mia informed him before she looked at her arm then back to him. “And I’d thank you to let me go.”

“Oh come on Black... you know you want it,” he informed her but Mia had lost her temper. She twisted her arm as she contorted her body and flipped the guy over her back. He landed with his back on the ground with a hard thud. Everyone just looked on in a stunned silence as the last echoes of laughter died around them.

Mia twisted his arm and placed her foot in the centre of his chest, pressing down painfully.

“MIA!” Harry’s voice snapped across the courtyard. Mia lifted her head and caught Harry’s hard glare. “Get over here. Now!” Mia scowled before she leaned down to the boy underneath her foot.

“Touch me again, and you’ll lose your hand,” Mia informed him dangerously before she let him go and walked off.

Hunter watched from a distance. He had been watching Mia since he had arrived at Hogwarts and found himself interested in the young girl. She was different from everyone else. She observed her surroundings and found everyone’s weakest spot and pressed on it hard whenever she had to. She was definitely tough.

Hunter nodded to himself before he walked off, heading to his original destination.

“Mia,” Cedric hurried after her, but Mia lifted her hands, cutting him off.

“Sorry, but right now, blood is thicker than water,” she told him before shaking her head and walking off, leaving Cedric standing alone.

Harry walked after her. He had thought she had calmed down, but obviously something had happened to piss her off again and it was making Harry annoyed. He knew how much she wanted to take everyone on but she had to keep her temper under control before she lost it completely and did something she would regret.

"I can't believe you," Harry muttered as he caught up with her. Mia just stared stonily ahead of her. Harry grabbed her arm and spun her around to face him. "Mia – you can't keep doing this," Harry told her. "You are running around spent because you are holding onto the anger – it's not hate you need!"

Mia sighed as she ran a hand through her black locks before she looked at Harry.

"I just hate this," Mia told him. Harry sighed. "I hate being helpless – knowing that you have to do these tasks - and not being able to help you during them. You could die, Harry!"

"Mia," Harry's eyes softened as he moved closer to her.

"I don't want to lose my brother," she admitted as tears filled her eyes. Harry enveloped her in a hug and held her close. Mia clung to him and sobbed softly.

"You're not gonna lose me. I promise you," Harry whispered. Mia shook her head from where she had rested her mouth against his shoulder.

"You can't promise that," Mia told him before she lifted her head and looked into his eyes. "You can't promise you won't die."

"I will do whatever it takes to make sure I come back to you all...alive," Harry promised her before he kissed her forehead and held her close. She buried her face into his neck, hoping that he was right and that he would be able to keep his promise. "Besides – as I was telling Cedric, if I didn't come back you and Hermione would find some way to bring me back and kill me again."

Mia let out a half sob/half laugh as she lifted her head and looked at Harry.

“I love you big bro,” Mia told him and Harry grinned as he ran a hand through her locks.

“I love you too little sis,” Harry told her. Mia smiled softly before she kissed Harry’s cheek and they both walked off with Mia resting her head on his shoulder and Harry’s arm around her.

Later Harry found himself sitting on the roof of Hogwarts, staring out to the sky as it changed colours as the sun started to set.

“Hey,” a male voice greeted. Harry turned and grinned when he saw Draco. He moved closer and sat down on the bench next to Harry and they both stared out at the scene. “How are you doing?”

“I swear, I feel like I’m just trading in one hysterical woman for another every day,” Harry muttered and Draco laughed.

“Mia and Hermione freaking out?” Draco asked and Harry nodded.

“Big time – Mia nearly snapped a sixth year’s hand off. Hermione has been clinging to me even more since she found out the first task contains dragons,” Harry told him and Draco sighed.

“Dad is up to something,” Draco admitted and Harry looked at him. “I don’t like this Harry – I don’t like the fact that you are in the middle of this – you know it’s not gonna end good.”

“Voldemort...” Harry trailed off and Draco nodded.

“I think they’ve found a way to bring him back. The fact that Peter has escaped from Azkaban isn’t making me feel any better,” Draco told him. Harry cursed as he leaned forward and caught Krum looking at Hermione reading at the base of a tree as he peered over the edge. “Okay, what are you mad at now?” Draco asked.

Startled, Harry looked back at Draco before grinning.

“Actually – I think that Viktor Krum is jealous of me. He keeps scowling at me and watching Hermione,” Harry told him. Draco leaned over and saw the same scene that Harry had and frowned.

“Will Hermione be alright?” Draco asked and Harry nodded.

“Yeah – she can hold her own. I told her that if Viktor keeps annoying her even after she told him that she’s not interested, she’s to tell me and I’ll talk with him,” Harry told him. “It’s better me than Mia – who is a loose cannon at the moment.”

“She’s just worried about you,” Draco reminded him. “You would be even worse than her if she was the one whose name came out of the fire.”

“Yeah – or even Hermione’s,” Harry told him. Draco snorted.

“Mate – you would have overturned the Ministry on the spot the moment they said that she had to compete,” Draco told him and Harry grinned.

“I thought Mia was going to kill them for me,” Harry admitted and Draco sighed.

“She's really that bad?” Draco asked and Harry nodded.

“Yeah – she’s been worried about us before too, but this year is taking a toll on her and it’s not even Christmas yet. She’s gonna burn herself out before Christmas even comes at the rate she's going,” Harry confessed to Draco, who leaned back and looked up at the sky.

“Uncle Sirius coming down?” Draco asked and Harry nodded.

“Yeah – he said he’ll be here for the first task,” Harry explained.

“Tell him about Mia and her actions. Uncle Sirius has to talk to her – maybe she’ll listen to him,” Draco suggested to Harry, who nodded.

“Yeah – either that or I go to Plan B,” Harry muttered. Draco looked at him, interested in that comment.

“What’s Plan B?” Draco asked.

“Professor McGonagall and Madam Pomfrey,” Harry informed Draco, who looked at Harry before laughing as understanding dawned on him.

“Mia would never forgive you!” Draco told him while laughing and Harry shrugged and gave Draco a sheepish smile.

“Would be worth it, though,” Harry admitted before he gave into his own laughter as Draco fell off the side of the bench while holding his sides.

Harry found himself pacing the tent the next morning. Hanging around with Draco the night before had relieved some of his tension, but now that the task was only a few hours away, it was really getting nerve wracking.

Death Eaters – he could take them on, but bloody hell... a dragon? Not just any dragon, either - a fully grown one!

Harry passed the flap only to hear a female voice call his name.

“Harry?” Hermione called out. Harry moved over to the flap and opened it slightly to see Hermione standing there.

“Hey, what are you doing here?” Harry asked. Hermione gave him a soft but nervous smile.

“I wanted to see how you were getting on,” Hermione admitted.

“Getting pretty nervous,” Harry admitted and Hermione nodded.

“It should be okay – all you need to do is focus on calling your broom to you and getting the task done,” Hermione told him and Harry nodded.

“While fighting a dragon,” Harry added on but that just pushed Hermione over to edge and she threw herself into his arms, making him stumble back slightly before he could wrap his arms around her waist. He held her close as he tried to comfort her.

A flash bulb went off, causing Harry and Hermione to blink and look in the direction of where it came from. Sure enough, a cameraman was standing there.

"Ah, young love," a female voice announced and Harry turned to see Rita Skeeter. His face tightened with restrained anger.

"Harry?" Hermione asked when she noticed his dislike of this new visitor.

"This is Rita Skeeter," Harry explained and understanding dawned on the younger female's face.

"You're not allowed in here, it's for champions only," Viktor spoke up as he stepped forward.

"Oh, don't be so silly," Rita informed him with a giggle. "Of course I'm allowed in here."

"No, you're not," Harry informed Rita with a steely glare as Hermione slipped her hand into his. Dumbledore appeared with Crouch and the other two heads of the other schools.

"Miss Skeeter, what are you doing here?" Dumbledore asked. Rita appeared very disappointed.

"Nothing, apparently," Rita informed them before she walked out of the tent with her camera man following her.

"Now, gather around everyone," Dumbledore ordered them and everyone moved forward. Dumbledore was about to speak, but remembered someone else in the tent that wasn't supposed to be there. Dumbledore arched an eyebrow as he addressed her.

"And what are you doing here Miss Granger?" Dumbledore asked. Hermione looked at him in realisation before she looked at Harry.

"Sorry, I was just here to wish Harry good luck," Hermione told him before she leaned over and kissed Harry on the cheek. She untangled her hand from his and left the tent with a lingering look at Harry as the flap closed behind her.

Dumbledore turned back to the champions.

“Here we are at the first task,” Dumbledore started. “Your task is to grab the golden egg from the dragon.”

“First you have to pick the dragon,” Crouch told them as he moved forward with a small brown bag in his hand and held it out.

Fleur reached into the bag and pulled out a small Common Welsh Green Dragon with the number ‘2’ on it.

Viktor reached into the bag and pulled out a small Chinese Fireball Red Dragon – it had the number ‘3’ on it.

Cedric reached into the bag and pulled out a small Blue Swedish Short Snout Dragon with the number ‘1’ on it.

Harry couldn’t help the small gulp when he realised what dragon was left. He closed his eyes before he placed his hand into the bag and pulled out a small black Horntail Dragon with the number ‘4’ on it. Harry let out a small sigh of defeat – it was one of the worst dragons to face.

“Excellent – now you have your dragon and your number. All you have to do is stay in here until your name is called out,” Crouch informed them before he hurried out to finish the other preparations.

All four champions shared nervous looks at the upcoming task.

Ron led Hermione and Mia up to the stage where they would be sitting to watch the event. They reached their seats and remained standing for a minute while they looked at the arena. Hermione saw the dragon handlers bringing in a Blue Swedish Short Snout and reality hit her hard.

“Dragons,” Hermione whispered. Ron just slipped his hand into hers only to regret it when her hand tightened in a death grip around his, almost cutting off his circulation.

“Bloody hell,” Ron mouthed to Mia as pain contorted his face. Mia just covered her mouth in amusement. She knew all too well of

Hermione's panic when it came to Harry and had wisely stayed away from Hermione's hands.

Hermione's mind was focused only on Harry and the fact that he had to face a dragon as they sat down in their seats.

Soon the champions had faced their dragons and it was now Harry's turn.

Harry couldn't still the butterflies in his stomach as he paced the tent, waiting for his name to be called. He just wanted to get the task over and done with.

"HARRY POTTER!" Crouch's voice finally shouted. Harry looked towards the opening of the tent before he straightened up, squared his shoulders and walked out of the tent.

Frowning when he couldn't see the dragon because he was surrounded by rocks, he scanned the area only to see the golden egg laying a few feet away from him.

Inching forward cautiously, Harry made his way over towards the egg. He ducked down quickly when a roar of flame shot over his head. The dragon had finally made her appearance.

"Shit," Harry swore as he looked around for another place to hide when he threw caution to the wind. He hurried over to the edge of the arena.

"Accio Firebolt!" Harry shouted as he waved his wand in a circle before jumping down and ducking again when the dragon sent another roar of flame towards him. Once he had himself hidden, he pressed his back against the rocks and let out a sigh. "I'm the element of fire and I'm hiding from a dragon. That's just fantastic," he muttered to himself.

Harry twisted his head to peer around the rock and saw the broom making its way over to him. He saw the dragon looking the other way, so he made a break for a higher point to grab his broom. The Dragon saw him out of the corner of her eye and she sent another ball of

flame at him, causing Harry to lift up his hand and dispel the fire as he had been taught.

Dumbledore sat up straighter when he saw this. Harry had just dispelled the fire ball and an uneasy feeling started up in the pit of his stomach – there was more to Harry Potter than he realised.

Harry jumped onto his broom and weaved out of the rocks. He looked down at the stage and saw the golden egg. As he was about to swoop down he heard a loud cracking noise.

The dragon let out a howl as she freed herself from her tether and started flying after Harry, causing everyone to bolt up from their seats.

“That’s not supposed to happen!” Hermione shouted, angry that they hadn’t made the chain tougher

Harry’s eyes widened when he saw the dragon flying after him and he swore under his breath. He turned his broom around and shot off away from the stage with the dragon hard on his tail.

Harry ducked and weaved each time the dragon shot out a flame of fire, desperate to kill the intruder that had stepped into the domain near her eggs.

Harry thought he might have lost her as he looked behind him without spotting her. Confused, his brows furrowed as scanned the area behind him, but when he turned back to the front he was shocked to see the dragon in front of him, already breathing a stream of flame.

“Whoa!” Harry exclaimed as he swerved the broom to the side, narrowly missing the flame before ducking down under the bridge. The dragon renewed her pursuit and followed him.

He needed to get back to the arena but he couldn’t lure the dragon back with him – she was unpredictable and might attack the students if she felt they were in her way.

Frustrated, Harry looked around for somewhere to lose her but he couldn’t find anything and he swore to himself. He was going to have to go along with his first plan.

Harry swung himself around on the broom so he was facing the dragon and just hoped that his broom wasn't going to crash into anything. He locked eyes with the dragon and his green eyes flared brightly, showing the fire behind them.

The dragon stilled for a moment in confusion before she let out a small whine in the back of her throat. She shook her head and swooped after Harry even more determined.

Harry tried again and pushed his will out to the dragon, gritting his teeth as sweat adorned his forehead. The pressure was growing enormous before he finally broke through and his eyes flared even more brilliantly. He lifted his hand and a ball of fire formed just a few inches off his palm. He shot it at the dragon and hit her squarely in the middle of her head.

The dragon howled as she swung her tail and hit Harry on the shoulder, one of her horns cutting into him. Harry just gritted as his teeth as he created another fireball and threw it again. Again it exploded against her head and the dragon flinched back and stayed still.

Her wings were still beating and keeping her up in the air as Harry closed his eyes and concentrated on the dragon.

He willed it to go back to the stage where she would be safe and where she could protect her eggs from anyone that might attempt to steal them as she left her nest unprotected. The dragon let out a whine before Harry spun around on his broom and led the way back to the nest with the dragon following, but not attacking.

Harry flew back to the stage and swooped down to grab the golden egg just as the Dragon landed just outside of the stage, refusing to harm her eggs.

The dragon handlers hurried over to the dragon and stunned her couple of times before they carried her away to where she could rest and be safe.

Everyone let out a huge howl of cheers. Hermione just felt faint with relief as she slumped down on her seat with Mia and Ron sitting

down next to her to make sure that she didn't pass out from the stress.

Harry wound up in the medical tent as Madam Pomfrey checked his wounds over to make sure that they weren't serious. She was smoothing some purple cream over the wound in his shoulder and jabbed her wand toward it after she was done, causing the cream to smoke as his wound closed.

"What's next?" Madam Pomfrey asked herself as she fussed over Harry. "Dementors last year, dragons this year..." She nodded with satisfaction when she saw that Harry's wound had healed itself up and cleaned off the excess potion.

Harry looked at his shoulder and grinned before looking to the hospital matron.

"Thanks," Harry told her. Madam Pomfrey just smiled back down at him before she moved on to the next curtain to check on her other patients. Harry got himself off the bed and made his way over to the flap of the tent only to see Hermione, Ron and Mia making their way over to him.

"Harry!" Hermione exclaimed as she hurried over and threw herself back into his arms and held him close.

Harry relaxed in her embrace and tried to comfort her as he looked at Mia and Ron over her shoulder and gave them a smile.

"I'm okay," Harry promised them. Mia shot him a look of relief while Ron just closed his eyes before looking at Harry with relief. "I'm okay," Harry repeated as he rubbed Hermione's back.

"Harry!" a male voice shouted and everyone turned to see Sirius rushing over to them. "That was brilliant – stupid but brilliant!" Sirius told him. Harry and Mia grinned at Sirius' unusual way of scolding him.

"Dad," Mia greeted as she stepped into her father's arms and hugged him tight. Sirius hugged her back before he held his daughter at arm's length and looked at her straight in the eye.

“And you, dear daughter, are going to talk with me about your actions this year,” Sirius told her and Mia nodded. Sirius kissed her forehead before he hugged her closely once more and looked at Harry. “What’s going on?” Sirius asked.

“My source says that it looks like Voldemort has found a way to come back – they think the Triwizarding championship is a diversion,” Harry explained. Sirius sighed as he reached out and placed a steadying hand on Harry’s shoulder.

“What ever you do, just stay safe. I do not want Voldemort or anyone else to get their hands on you. I couldn’t deal with it if I lost any of you,” Sirius told them.

Hermione let Harry go step closer to Sirius where the three of them embraced each other in a hug.

Ron just wrapped an arm around Hermione’s shoulders and pulled her close as she watched the family share a tender moment together with a soft smile.

“We’ll watch out for them,” Ron told Sirius, who looked at him. “You can count on it – us Weasleys are very protective.” Sirius couldn’t help the grin that appeared over his face at Ron’s words.

“I know - but you take care yourself. You guys are becoming more like family every time we meet like this,” Sirius told him. Ron nodded, flushing with pleasure at Sirius’ words. He never thought that they would see him like family. Hermione elbowed him in the stomach, understanding where his thoughts had gone.

“Ron! I thought we made it clear that you were like another brother to us!” Hermione scolded him, startling Harry and Mia, who looked at Ron.

“So did I,” they both exclaimed, causing Ron to blush even more.

“Sorry – I’m just not used to being a part of anyone else’s family but my own,” Ron admitted but Mia just waved it aside before she hugged him.

“You’re like a brother to us – never ever doubt that!” Mia told him and Ron nodded as he hugged her back, causing Harry to reach over and embrace them in a hug before he pulled Hermione over to include her too.

Sirius hung back with a soft and pleased smile on his face as he watched his children growing up – even though Ron and Hermione weren’t related to him by blood, they were still his children in his heart.

“Sirius,” a soft female voice interrupted and Sirius turned to see McGonagall walking toward him.

“Professor McGonagall,” Sirius greeted and she gave him a soft smile.

“Sirius, I haven’t been your professor in a long time,” she softly scolded him but Sirius just gave her his trademark cheeky grin.

“I still respect you Professor McGonagall,” he told her, reminding her of the times he used to stay that all the time when he was younger.

McGonagall let out a small chuckle as she patted his shoulder.

“And you’re still quite the flatterer,” she scolded him before she looked at the children and smiled softly. “They are creating a stronger bond than I’ve ever seen.” Sirius nodded as he looked at the kids too.

“Yeah – they are amazing,” Sirius admitted.

“Kids,” Professor McGonagall spoke up and they all looked toward her. “Harry – you need to check on your score and you all need to head back up to the castle – it’s nearly time for bed.”

“Yes Professor McGonagall,” they all stated as Harry, Hermione and Mia hugged Sirius before they walked off with Ron, leaving the two adults staring after them with soft yet concerned expressions on their faces.

Harry looked up at the scoreboard and found that he had 40 points.

“So, I’m tied with Krum?” Harry asked and Hermione nodded.

“Yeah – they took points away from you because of your wound – you’re not meant to get hurt,” Hermione explained, causing Ron to shake his head.

“Amazing how they think you can face a dragon and get away unscathed,” Ron told them.

“What happened with the others?” Harry asked.

“Cedric turned a stone into a dog to distract the dragon’s attention. It worked, but the dragon got bored and shot a stream of flame at him, so he got singed a little bit,” Ron told them.

“Fleur tried doing the veela dance – it made her dragon sleepy. It worked for a little while until the dragon snapped out of it and singed the bottom of her robes,” Hermione explained and Mia rolled her eyes.

“Krum shot a spell at the dragon’s eyes and caused it to howl in pain before stomping over the eggs – he got a majority of points taken away because you’re not supposed to let the other eggs be damaged,” Mia explained and Harry nodded.

Harry, Hermione, Ron and Mia made it to the common room before Ron asked Harry the question that has been burning in his mind.

“What did you do to the dragon?” Ron asked curiously and Harry sighed.

“I made a legilimency connection with her because we’re fire related – let me tell you, it damn well nearly gave me a headache,” Harry told them.

Ron had found out about them being elementals after Mia had saved Harry in their third year. He was shocked at first before he accepted it and encouraged them to use their abilities whenever it came up in practice.

Hermione had done research and found out that Ron was an encourager – meaning that he was to bond with one of the elementals to help them grow to their full potential.

Mia had made a connection with him and found that he was to bond with the element spirit because Ron could see things that other people missed and because he was a strategist, meaning that he was able to look at something and plot out a plan to get the result they needed – meaning he would work with elementals.

Harry and Hermione found out that they were each other's encourager – Hermione to Harry because she was water, meaning she was able to keep his temper down and concentrate properly on what he needed to do.

Harry to Hermione because he was the flame of passion – they both had blushed when they found out about that, much to Ron and Mia's amusement. It meant that Harry sparked a passion in Hermione to do whatever she wanted to do – for example, studying. Harry would encourage her with it and she would find herself completing a book with an hour.

"So you made a connection with the dragon and told her to go back to her nest because she had left it unprotected?" Hermione asked and Harry nodded.

"Yes – it was obvious that she wasn't going to let me go until one of us was dead and I didn't want to kill her. I couldn't lead her back to the nest the way she was because all the spectators were there, so I told her to go back and protect her eggs and to leave me alone," Harry explained, finishing off his tale.

After Hermione gave the Fat Lady the password and they all stepped in only to stumble when a loud cheer arose at their entrance and startled them all.

Harry looked around and found that all the Gryffindors were standing around the room with assortments of treats and drinks that the twins had brought up for a celebration. He grinned at their support.

"Happy and excited are you?" Harry teased them as a warm feeling crossed over his body. Gryffindor was the only house that had believed Harry when he said he hadn't put his name in the Goblet of Fire. The twins, Dean, Seamus and Neville had made it clear that

they backed Harry because he wouldn't have placed his name in the Goblet of Fire.

The others had agreed with them because they had gotten to know Harry from the time they spent in the common room.

"You did it!" Dean exclaimed as he patted Harry's back. The twins yanked Harry to the middle of the group, leaving Mia rolling her eyes.

"Sure, they get to take our brother away from us," she muttered in a teasing way, causing Hermione to stifle a laugh as they all mingled with the other students.

Soon, everyone was chanting about listening to the egg and Harry grinned as he held up the golden egg.

"So, you really want to hear it?" Harry asked and the whole of Gryffindor shouted, "YES!" Harry laughed as he opened the egg and a horrible screeching noise emitted from it, causing everyone to cover their ears.

"Close it!" everyone screamed and Harry hurried to close the egg, cutting the noise off, much to everyone's relief.

"What the hell was that?" Seamus demanded and Dean shook his head.

"The next task – that's what," Dean informed them before Harry frowned.

"What on earth would I have to fight in the next task that sounds like that?" Harry asked.

"Who knows," Mia muttered under her breath as she racked her brain, trying to figure out if they had researched creatures that made those kinds of sounds. But she wasn't coming up with anything at all.

"Let's go to bed," Ron suggested. "We're all pretty worn out from today's excitement. Maybe we'll have a better idea of what the next task is tomorrow," Ron told them and got nods in agreement in return.

“Guys, can you carry the first years up to their beds – we’ll do the same for the girls,” Hermione asked them. They nodded and the fourth years each picked up a student and carried them up to their beds before they went to bed themselves. Each of them was out the moment their head hit the pillow.

TBC

Chapter 10: Elves, Lessons and Teasing.

Harry made his way into the Great Hall with Hermione by his side. They had woken up early and decided to head down to breakfast before getting ready for classes.

They sat down at their normal seats and to their surprise; three owls came with some mail. A brown owl dropped a newspaper in front of Hermione after she had paid for it. Hedwig and Cassie, Mia's owl, dropped a couple of letters in front of Harry. He scanned the envelope quickly and placed them next to his plate just as Mia made her way into the Great Hall.

Mia grinned when she saw them and moved over to take her seat across from Harry. She scanned through the letters and opened her own while she filled her plate.

Harry just started tucking into his meal when he heard an annoyed gasp come from Hermione.

"What!?" Hermione demanded with her eyebrows high in shock.

"What is it?" Harry asked as he looked over her shoulder. He arched an eyebrow as he read and said, "I didn't know that we were together and you are cheating on me."

"What did you say?" Mia demanded as she looked her best friend and brother. Hermione turned the paper around so that Mia could see the headlines.

'Boy-Who-Lived's Secret Heartache' It had a picture of Harry to one side and a picture of Krum on the other with Hermione in the middle.

Since the first task, Rita had been spreading news that Harry and Hermione were having a secret romance and was trying to make a big deal out of it, but now that Harry had said something to annoy Rita apparently she had decided to spread this new lie.

"So – you're dating Harry and cheating on him with Krum?" Mia asked in amusement as she scanned the paper. She grabbed it and

bunched it up before throwing it over her shoulder. Unfortunately for her, it hit Snape in the face as he was walking by.

“Miss Black!” Snape snapped, causing Mia to spin around in her seat while Harry and Hermione ducked their heads down in an attempt to stifle their snickers at watching the ball of paper hit Snape’s face.

“Yes?” Mia asked, curious as to what had angered the potions teacher now.

“Thirty points for littering and for attacking a teacher!” Snape snapped at her. Mia’s eyebrows shot up.

“Attacking a teacher?” Mia parroted. “When did I attack a teacher?”

“When you threw that bunched up paper over your shoulder and hit me,” Snape informed her with a glare. “Any more questions and I will issue detentions.” With that, he stalked off, leaving a confused Mia behind and an amused Harry and Hermione.

“What just happened?” Mia demanded and Harry grinned.

“You hit Snape on the face with the balled up newspaper,” Harry informed her and Mia just gaped at him.

“You are kidding, right?” Mia asked but got a headshake from the other two. She suddenly burst out laughing, attracting attention from the students that were having their breakfast and a glower from Snape – which she missed.

Harry and Hermione just laughed with her as Ron showed up, curious about what he had missed.

“What happened?” Ron asked as he sat down next to Mia only to result in more laughter. “What?”

Harry and Hermione made their way out of the Great Hall a short time after that, still chuckling over events when Harry remembered something.

“Oh – we need to get to the kitchens,” Harry told Hermione, who just arched an eyebrow at that unexpected pronouncement.

“Kitchens?” Hermione asked and Harry nodded as he took Hermione’s hand and led her down the corridor. When he came to a stop in front of a fruit bowl painting, Harry looked around before reaching up and tickling the pear.

Hermione couldn’t help the soft grin that appeared on her face when she heard the pear giggle as the wall swung open and revealed a passage. Harry took Hermione’s hand once more and headed down the stairs as the wall slid back into place behind them. When he reached the bottom, Harry knocked on that door before opening it.

To Hermione’s amazement, the kitchen was full of house elves, bustling around to get food ready for lunch.

“Harry?” she turned to face him and Harry grinned.

“You can ask the elves any questions about their work – find out how they are bonded and what background they have and all that,” Harry explained. Hermione’s face just brightened with excitement and happiness before she kissed his cheek and gave him a hard hug. She hurried over to the elves, startling them with her eagerness and her questions.

Harry grinned as he watched her before he left the kitchens, leaving Hermione alone with the elves and her questions.

Later Harry made his way over to his transfiguration class and entered it only to arch an eyebrow when he saw that the room had been rearranged.

The tables had been pushed to the back and there were chairs on the left and right sides of the room. He could see that a majority of the girls were on the right side while most of the boys sat on the left.

Harry just frowned slightly before he moved forward towards Ron. McGonagall entered the room with Filch hurrying after her and he moved over to the phonograph that was sitting on a table.

“Boys and girls,” McGonagall greeted. “I need inform you that there is a Yule ball coming up during Christmas so you all need to learn how to...dance! Our champions will start the dance,” with a nod towards Harry, “and then those of 4th year and above will be able to join in.” Harry and Ron shared a look of horror before Ron groaned.

“Yule Ball,” Ron lamented but Harry just balked silently at the idea of being singled out as a champion to start the Ball.

“It’s alright for you – I have to dance with the other champions in order to start the Ball!” Harry complained. Ron winced in sympathy before they turned back to the front and looked at their teacher.

“Dancing lessons?” Mia asked with an arched eyebrow. “Why?”

“Because you all are representing Hogwarts,” McGonagall explained. Mia gave a soft sigh and a shake of her head.

“Figures,” she muttered and Hermione grinned at her before she turned back to the front.

“Now, I’ll need someone to come up here,” McGonagall told them before she looked around and her eyes landed on Ron. “Mr. Weasley?” Ron just looked at her with horror and fear in his blue eyes.

“What?” Ron demanded but McGonagall wasn’t in the mood to repeat herself as she waved her hand.

“Up here Mr Weasley,” she scolded him and Ron grudgingly got up and moved to the clear area by McGonagall while the boys just snickered in amusement. “Okay. Now, place a hand up here,” McGonagall took one of Ron’s hands and placed it in the air before she placed her hand in it. “And place your other hand on my waist.” She went to draw Ron’s hand on it but Ron yanked it away.

“What?” Ron asked in panic and she sighed impatiently. The boys stifled more snickers.

“Hand on my waist Mr. Weasley,” she informed him as she drew the hand firmly to her waist. She placed her other hand on Ron’s shoulder before she looked at Filch and nodded her head. Filch

switched on the music as she turned back to face Ron. "Okay, on my count."

McGonagall moved to the music with Ron following her. He looked down at their feet only to get a sharp "Keep your head up!" from her. Ron snapped his head up as they both continued to move to the music.

Once McGonagall was satisfied with the movement, she pulled away from Ron and allowed him to move back to his seat before she looked around the classroom.

"So, who's first?" McGonagall asked. The girls just looked at the boys while the boys just looked at either the ceiling or the floor, not once making eye contact. Harry rolled his eyes and took action.

Harry got up off his seat and moved over to Hermione and held out his hand. Hermione grinned as she slipped her hand into his and they both moved to the middle of the floor.

McGonagall smiled to herself as she moved over to Filch and nodded. Filch again put the music on before they repeated the steps that McGonagall and Ron had practised.

Ron made his way over to Mia and they both took up the dance, again following the steps that McGonagall had taught them. Soon everyone was joining in on the dance floor as they practised for the Ball.

When class was over, Hermione made her way over to the library while Ron headed down to the Great Hall to get some food. Mia looked at Harry and saw that he was staring after Hermione before she rolled her eyes and nudged him, drawing his attention to her.

"Go and ask her to the Ball before someone else does," Mia informed him before she turned on her heels and walked away. Harry thought about it then hurried off in the same direction that Hermione had gone.

Harry made his way into the library before he looked around and sensed that Hermione was in the back near her usual spot. He made

his way over and found her standing next to a bookcase scanning for books to help her with her research.

“Hermione...” Harry started but stopped when Hermione looked at him. He fought the butterflies that had started to pound his stomach.

“Yes?” Hermione asked. Harry fidgeted with his fingers for a short moment before he finally decided to take the plunge.

“Will you go to the Ball with me?” Harry asked and held his breath. The ball, he thought wryly, was now in Hermione’s court.

Hermione stared at him for a long moment – they both knew that Hermione’s answer would make or break them. Hermione gave a soft smile as she easily decided her answer.

“Yes, I will go to the Ball with you,” She told him. Harry let go of the breath that he had been holding on and smiled brightly.

“Great!” Harry told her and Hermione smiled brightly too, both of them excited about the upcoming event. “I’ll meet you outside the Great Hall?” Hermione nodded.

“Okay,” Hermione agreed. Harry leaned in and kissed her cheek before he left the library with Hermione staring after him with a soft dazed smile.

Neither of them noticed Viktor Krum frowning darkly from behind the bookcase that he was hiding behind. He had planned to ask Hermione but Harry had gotten there first. Viktor frowned again before he made his way out of the library altogether, annoyed with the setback and made his way out of the castle altogether.

Hermione jerked herself back to reality and found the book that she had been looking for. She picked it up and hugged it close to her chest with a dreamy smile on her face as she moved over to her table, humming a soft tune under her breath only to be startled when she bumped into someone.

She looked up and saw that she had bumped into a blonde girl who was brushing her hair out of her blue eyes. She looked up at Hermione and gave her a soft smile.

“Oh, sorry,” Hermione apologised but the girl shook her head.

“It’s okay Hermione,” the girl waved it off and Hermione arched an eyebrow at the mention of her name before she narrowed them.

“You know me...but...”

“Luna Lovegood – I’m a tentative friend of Ginny’s – we’re in the same year together and I’m in Ravenclaw,” Luna explained and Hermione smiled softly.

“It’s nice to meet you,” Hermione told her and Luna smiled softly back.

“Same to you but I’m afraid I have to go – watch out for the small elves that may be hanging around – they like to steal something precious to you,” Luna explained before she walked off, humming under her breath. Hermione just stared at the girl in bewilderment before she shook her head and walked back to her table.

When Mia made her way into the girl’s dormitory later that night only to arch an eyebrow when she heard humming from her best friend, who was standing on one side of the bed and brushing her hair.

“What are you humming about?” Mia asked as she moved closer to her bed.

Hermione just gave her a soft and secret smile before she turned back to her nightly ritual. Mia frowned in amusement as she racked her brain before something hit her. Mia’s eyes widen as she hurried over to the bed.

She jumped up onto the bed, kneeling down before Hermione and grabbing her upper arms. “Harry asked you to the Ball!”

Hermione looked at her best friend, shocked that Mia had figured it out.

“How did you know?” Hermione demanded. Mia just grinned.

“Only reason you would be humming!” Mia told her, happiness and excitement bubbling inside of her. “You two are finally together!”

“Whoa!” Hermione exclaimed, cutting Mia off before she got ahead of herself. “Harry just asked me to the ball – nothing about getting together.”

Mia just waved her hand, dismissing it.

“You two are driving me insane!” Mia exclaimed as she let go of Hermione’s arms and clutched her own hair. “Harry asked you to the ball – the same girl he has been crushing on since first year and tried to kiss since then. You accepted his invitation to the ball – the same boy you’ve been crushing on since first year and tried to kiss since then too!”

Hermione opened her mouth to dismiss it but no answers came to her mind, leaving her speechless. “See?” Mia asked, pleased that she had proven her point.

“How do you know that Harry thinks of this as a date?” Hermione challenged but got a sharp look in return.

“I live with the boy,” Mia reminded her dryly. Hermione stifled a giggle. “Trust me when I say that this is date to Harry.”

“Oh,” Hermione uttered as the full ramifications hit her and she slumped down on the bed. Mia shifted herself so she was sitting next to her with her legs hanging over the side.

“I don’t get why you are so worried – you and Harry have been like this since first year,” Mia told her and Hermione sighed.

“Exactly – so how do we know it’s not just a childhood dream we are fulfilling?” Hermione asked. Mia looked at her best friend before grinning.

“Because it won’t work out that way,” Mia told her and Hermione looked at her. “Look – you and Harry have been through a lot

together in the past three or so years. And your feelings have done nothing but gotten stronger – that tells me that it's something special between the two of you and that it's something real.”

Hermione just gave her a soft smile, thanking her for her words.

Ron was restless. He was lying in bed wide awake, shifting. He finally gave up and swung his legs over the side of the bed to look at his best friend.

Harry had been different when he had come back from the library and it was making Ron antsy. He knew that Hermione had been in the library and Harry had come back with a big smile on his face, whistling.

“Well?” Ron asked as he leaned over. Harry look at him from where he was lying on his bed with his arms pillowing his head.

“Well what?” Harry asked and Ron rolled his eyes.

“Did you ask Hermione to the ball or not?” Ron asked. Harry just gave him a secret grin before he turned back to the ceiling, leaving Ron frustrated. “Harry!” Harry laughed as he turned back to face his friend.

“I asked her to the ball with me and she said...” Ron leaned forward, eager to find out what Hermione’s answer was. “Yes.”

“YES!” Ron whooped as he thrust his arms into the air in celebration. Harry and Hermione could finally step out of the safe box they had locked themselves into and move on with their relationship.

Harry just grinned as he watched his friend's joyous celebration while he turned back to face the ceiling. The ball was going to be a landmark event as they had their first date.

Meanwhile Hermione and Mia were lying side by side on Hermione’s bed as they both stared up at the ceiling.

“What is going on with you and Cedric?” Hermione asked and Mia glanced at her before rolling her eyes.

“Nothing,” Mia told her. Hermione arched an eyebrow and Mia grinned. “Trust me – all we are is flirting partners – he's already asked Cho Chang out to the ball.”

“Oh – the Ravenclaw girl that plays Seeker?” Hermione asked and Mia nodded. “I thought he would have asked you.” Mia shook her head.

“Please – I just want a little fun ‘Mione... I’m not really in the mood for a relationship until we're all out of danger,” Mia told her. Hermione sighed as she moved her hand and linked it with Mia's.

“Mia – you can’t deny yourself happiness because you are worried about Harry or the rest of us – you need to experience happiness if we want to win this war,” Hermione told her but Mia shrugged. “What about Hunter?”

Mia shot her a sharp look – telling Hermione that she wasn’t happy with the track that Hermione had taken.

“What about Hunter?” Mia asked cautiously and Hermione looked at her.

“You like him – you try and deny it but you like him,” Hermione told her and Mia sighed as she went back to staring at the ceiling. “That speech that you gave at the beginning of the term tells me that you are attracted to him.”

“Hermione – how many times do I have to tell you...?” Mia started but Hermione cut her off.

“Yeah, I know – you don’t want to date a bad boy because they only want one thing. But how do you know that Hunter is a bad boy? You don’t even know him,” Hermione reminded as she eyed her best friend. “Or have you truly found that out about him?” Mia sighed.

“I remember him from the party that we went to over the summer – he was the one that I was flirting with then he took another girl up the stairs?” Mia reminded and Hermione scrunched her nose.

“Are you sure? I thought it was a red haired male who took her up,” Hermione told her. Mia rolled her eyes.

“They both took her up,” Mia reminded her and it suddenly hit Hermione. Her eyes widened in shock as she recalled what had happened next.

“Great – and she claimed that she had the best night of her life,” Hermione remembered and Mia nodded.

“He came right up to me after that and flirted with me again,” Mia admitted and Hermione grimaced.

“Ah,” Hermione caught on before she sighed and shook her head, wanting to change the conversation. “So, who are you going to the ball with?”

“No one,” Mia told her and Hermione grinned.

“Solo gal – I think the school just might have a heart attack,” Hermione told her and Mia grinned.

“What can I say? I live to shock others,” Mia told her, causing the two of them to burst into laughter.

TBC

Chapter 11: Christmas and the Yule Ball.

"Happy Christmas!" Mia greeted as she made her way down the stairs into the common room. She grinned when she saw all the students lounging around the room. Everyone in fourth year and above stayed behind at school so they could attend the ball.

Most of the thirds and below had gone home as usual – there were some thirds years staying behind because they had been invited by some of the fourth years.

"Happy Christmas Mia," everyone greeted back while Hermione smiled at how 'Christmassy' Mia looked. She wore a red shirt and a red mini skirt with white trim at the bottom. Mia also wore her mid-calf high heeled boots, also red, and the top half of her hair was pulled back into a clasp with strands falling around her face, making her look more innocent than she was.

"Very Christmassy, Mia," Harry told her from where he was sitting next to Hermione with an arm slung over her shoulders, echoing Hermione's thoughts. Mia just grinned.

"A girl loves a reason to dress up," Mia informed him as she moved closer to the tree and started digging out the presents. "Who wants to play Santa this Christmas?"

"I'll do it," Ron said as he moved over next to her and sat down. He started pulling the presents toward him. "Okay – this one is to Mia from me," Ron told her as he handed it to her.

Mia grinned as she took the present and ripped into it. She opened the box and found herself looking at a double ended blade that curved slightly at the tip while the handle was twisted and curved.

"Oh – this is brilliant!" Mia exclaimed and Ron grinned.

"The twins and I pitched in to buy you this," Ron told her and Mia just hugged him hard before she sat back and looked at the knife before she placed it back in the box.

"This is to Harry from me," Ron continued.

Harry took the present and opened it before he gaped at the key chain that Ron had had made. Harry lifted it up and saw that one side contained a picture of a laughing Mia wrapped up in Harry's arms while Harry tickled her. The other side contained a single picture of Hermione, who was sitting on a couch, reading a book.

Harry ran his thumb over the picture of Hermione before he looked up at Ron, who just grinned and winked at him. Harry gave a soft laugh before he placed the key chain back in and picked up the other part of the present, which consisted of a very good drawing of Harry and Hermione together.

Harry looked up at Ron, curious to where Ron had received this from and Ron grinned.

"Seamus helped me out – I gave him pictures and told him what to draw. He did this and passed it on to me. I guess you can say it's from both of us," Ron explained and Harry grinned back in reply as Hermione leaned over and looked at the drawing.

Harry and Hermione were sitting together on the couch. Hermione had her head on his shoulder as she read a book while Harry had an arm over her shoulder and was resting his cheek on her hair with his eyes closed.

Both of them had a look of contentment on their faces and Hermione couldn't help but fall in love with the painting.

"This is to Hermione, from me," Ron told them as he handed Hermione the present and watched as she opened it to find that it was a book on the water element. She looked up at Ron with a happy smile on her face. "I know that there wasn't a lot about the water element so I contacted Bill and he found it for me."

"Thank you!" Hermione told him and Ron nodded, waving it off before he handed out everyone's presents from Mia.

Harry had received a Stellerstarr CD, because he liked the song 'Sweet Troubled Soul' and a black leather jacket – which had Hermione checking it out. Ron had received a new book on quidditch and a silver chained necklace that had a tribal charm. Hermione had

received a new charm for her charm bracelet. This one had an actual friendship charm on it, and Mia revealed a matching one on her anklet.

Next Ron gave out the presents from Hermione. Ron had received a book on defence so that Ron knew how to work his way around certain tasks for their fifth year and he had received an older collector's version of another book on quidditch.

Harry received a book on fire and what type of fire that he would be able to manipulate later when he had fully grown his elemental abilities. He had also received a silver chained necklace.

Mia had received a book on the weather so she would know how to conjure up any weather she wanted and a pair of twisted silver earrings that Hermione had seen her admire in a shop.

Finally, Ron gave everyone their presents from Harry. Ron had received a wand holster and a book on self defence. Ron had asked Harry to teach him how to fight and Harry had given him the book as a starting point.

Mia had received a stuffed cuddly toy of a dolphin, much to her delight. Harry couldn't help the grin that crossed his face when he saw Mia cuddle the dolphin close to her and saw that there was a dolphin charm in a box that she could attach to her anklet.

Hermione opened her present only to find that it was another box. She shot Harry a curious look, one that had Harry grinning.

"Oh...Harry!" Hermione gasped out as she opened the box to reveal matching earrings and necklace.

"I thought you might would like to wear it for the ball," Harry told her and Hermione gave him a soft smile.

"Thank you," Hermione told him as she leaned in and kissed his cheek before she settled back on her seat and looked at the jewellery once more.

Ron looked around the bottom of the tree before his eyes narrowed when he saw a thin box at the back. He reached in and pulled it out before looking at the tag and arched his eyebrow.

“This is to Mia but it doesn’t say who it is from,” Ron told them as he handed the thin box to Mia, who took it with a puzzled look. She looked cautiously at the box and opened it.

A startled gasp came from Mia as she looked at the item that was in the box, causing Ron, Harry and Hermione to look at her before they leaned over and found themselves staring at the item in stunned silence.

“Oh, wow,” Ron gasped out when he saw what Mia was looking at. “Who got you that?” Mia just shook her head; she didn’t know who had gotten her it because no note had come with it.

“Are you going to wear it to the ball?” Hermione asked curiously. “It would go with your dress.”

“Right now, I just want to know who gave it to me,” Mia admitted as she fingered the present before she closed the box and looked at the time. “We’d better get ready – the ball will be soon.”

Everyone agreed as they all got up from their sitting place and headed up to their respective dorm rooms to get ready.

Harry found himself standing at the bottom of the steps as he straightened his robes when he heard an amused male voice.

“Panic much?” Harry turned around and saw that Draco was standing in the shadows, watching Harry with an amused expression. Harry grinned as he moved closer and rested his back against the wall.

“Kinda,” Harry admitted before he sighed. “It’s a big night for Hermione and me; I just don’t want to mess it up.” Draco laughed softly.

“Harry – I don’t think you could mess it up even if you tried,” Draco reassured him. Harry looked over his shoulder at him.

“Who are you going with?” Harry asked and Draco grinned.

“I’m with Susan Bones,” Draco told him and Harry grinned back.

“Finally got the guts to ask her out did you?” Harry asked and got a shove to the shoulder for his trouble. Harry laughed.

“Harry!” a male voice called out and he turned to see that Ron was waving him over.

“I gotta go and play golden boy,” Harry told Draco before he looked at him and grinned. “Catch you inside.”

“Later,” Draco told him and they both walked off towards their groups.

“Who were you talking to?” Ron asked curiously. Harry just shook his head.

“Just a classmate – he’s a little nervous about dancing,” Harry told Ron, who nodded then turned back to his date. Parvati, however, looked over Ron’s shoulder and gasped slightly.

Harry, curious about Parvati’s reaction, turned around and felt his jaw drop slightly when he caught sight of Hermione standing at the top of the stairs.

“Oh...wow,” Harry uttered out as Hermione made her way down the stairs. She shot Harry a shy smile as she brushed back a strand of her hair.

Mia had pinned Hermione’s hair up after straightening it and had left some strands loose. She wore a pink and purple dress. It fit her upper body like second skin but flared out at the waist and fell to the ground in simple elegance.

“You look amazing,” Harry told her and Hermione blushed slightly.

“You look great too,” Hermione told him as she eyed him over. Harry had gotten his hair cut a little bit shorter and wore black robes with a green shirt and black trousers. Hermione grinned when she saw the

bow tie before she reached out and touched it. Harry rolled his eyes in return.

“Mia threatened me with bodily harm if I didn’t wear the tie,” Harry explained. Hermione just grinned wider before she pulled her hand away and Harry lifted up his arm, allowing her to slip her arm into his.

“She’s beautiful,” Parvati stated from where she was standing next to Ron, looking over Harry and Hermione’s shoulder this time.

Ron, Harry and Hermione turned around to see Mia standing at the top of the stairs, looking around a bit nervously. When her eyes landed on them she grinned before she straightened slightly.

Hermione couldn’t help the pleased smile that crossed over her face, because Parvati was wrong - Mia was gorgeous.

Hunter watched from where he was standing a little further down from the door. He had arrived early so he could see Mia and couldn’t help the soft smile that appeared on his face when he saw her.

Mia was wearing a dark blue dress with accents in light blue. The top fit snugly while it flared out slightly at the waist before it fell, straight to the ground. Thin straps crisscrossed at her back.

The one thing Hunter noticed the most was the necklace that Mia was wearing. She wore a blue topaz crystal necklace. The crystal was suspended just above her breasts and it twinkled in the light. Her black hair was twisted up with strands falling down around face her and framing her neck, making her appear more vulnerable.

Hunter felt his heart clench softly before he turned away and made his way into the Great Hall.

Cedric couldn’t keep his eyes off Mia as she made her way over to her friends while smiling brightly. Cedric looked down at Cho before he looked back to Mia once more and realised that he had to make a decision.

“We’ll see you inside,” Mia said once she had joined Harry and Hermione, who nodded as Mia, Ron and Parvati headed into the hall

with the other students, leaving the champions and their dates outside.

Professor McGonagall rounded the corner and smiled when she saw her students all dressed up. She noticed that Fleur was with a Ravenclaw boy who seemed to drooling over her, Krum was with a small brunette who was clinging onto his arm, and Cedric, of course, was with Cho Chang.

McGonagall looked towards the last couple and couldn't help the soft grin that crossed her usually strict face at the sight of Harry and Hermione looking so cute together. She cleared her throat and turned her face passive quickly.

"Students," she greeted as she moved closer to them and nodded her head. "You will be opening the dance." She moved over to the doors and opened them before stepping to the side to allow the champions through.

Cedric walked in first with Cho, then Fleur with her date, followed by Krum and his date preceding Harry and Hermione.

Harry looked toward Hermione and smiled softly.

"Ready?" Harry asked and Hermione grinned back as she slipped her arm through Harry's.

"Ready," she told him and they both walked through the doorway and into the Great Hall. The students cheered as the champions made their way over to the dance floor. Almost immediately the music started and they started dancing, officially opening the ball.

Once the dance was opened and students started joining the champions, Mia made her way over to the drinks table and was about to pick up a cup when a voice interrupted her.

"Here you go," a male voice spoke up and Mia turned around to see that Hunter was standing there, holding a cup of juice out to her.

Mia arched an eyebrow at him before she looked at the cup then looked back at him.

“Should I be worried about the juice being spiked?” Mia asked and Hunter grinned.

“Nah – a waste of time if you ask me, I'd rather charm the girl,” Hunter told her and Mia couldn't help the wry smile that crossed her face before she took the cup. While she did, she scanned Hunter and found that he was looking quite handsome. He was wearing a black trouser with a white shirt and a black tie. His hair was in its usual spikes and he wore black robes over his clothes.

“Having a good time?” Mia asked and Hunter looked at her, startled that she was talking to him cordially before an amused smile crossed his face.

“You are talking to me? Of your own free will? Has hell frozen over and I just became the king of the Underworld?” Hunter exclaimed.

Mia was about to open her mouth to argue with him when she saw the amusement in his eyes and settled for a half hearted glare.

“There is no need to mock me,” she informed him and Hunter laughed.

“Sorry – it's just that every time I try to talk to you, I get a chilly glare in response,” Hunter informed her and Mia couldn't help the soft laughter that came out of her mouth at Hunter's description.

“Sorry about that,” Mia admitted. “I just... I felt like I knew you somewhere.” Hunter arched an eyebrow at her and Mia blushed slightly. “We met back in the summer.”

Hunter's eyebrows furrowed as he tried to place her when his eyes widened in understanding.

“You're the girl that I flirted with!” Hunter exclaimed as he remembered before shaking his head and frowning. “And if I remember correctly, you started being cold to me after I came down the stairs.”

Mia arched an eyebrow at him.

“You went up the stairs with a girl and another male then came back down later – why do you think I was chilly toward you?” Mia informed him and Hunter laughed softly.

“I only took her up the stairs because she was hung over,” Hunter explained and Mia arched an eyebrow at him, causing Hunter to grin. “I used a sobering potion on her and then we came back down the stairs – we most definitely did not have a threesome – I don’t share very well.”

Mia rolled her eyes at that before shaking her head. “Is what why you’ve been frosty with me since I’ve arrived at Hogwarts?” Hunter asked curiously. Mia shook her head.

“I didn’t remember where I had seen you. No – there’s something else put me on an edge – it’s like you know something about me that I don’t want you to know,” Mia explained and Hunter laughed.

“Jeez Mia, you make it sound like I’m stalking you,” Hunter told her and Mia flushed slightly before she rolled her eyes and crossed her arms.

“That’s how I feel,” Mia stated and Hunter grinned.

“Don’t worry – I don’t know anything that you’re not going to tell me,” Hunter told her and Mia smiled softly, enjoying the banter with Hunter. She briefly wondered why she had been so worried about him but just squashed the small voice in her mind and allowed herself to enjoy the moment.

“Would you like to dance with me?” Hunter asked as he held out his hand towards Mia. Mia looked at his hand and then into his dark eyes and felt a soft smile crosses her face.

“I would like to,” she told him before she placed her hand into his and he led them out onto the dance floor. He turned to face her and placed one hand on her waist, joining their other hands together as was proper. Mia placed her free hand on Hunter’s shoulder and they both swayed to the soft music.

Cedric watched from where he was dancing with Cho. Mia was looking up at Hunter and was laughing at something Hunter was telling her. Cedric couldn't help the small clench of his heart as he watched Mia's blue eyes lighten up with happiness while smiling and replying back to Hunter, who also laughed at Mia's response.

Cedric looked back at Cho when she nudged him, noticing that his attention was somewhere else and he smiled at her.

"Is there something wrong?" Cho asked and Cedric shook his head.

"Nothing's wrong," Cedric assured Cho before she gave him a soft smile and leaned her head into his chest. Cedric rested his chin on top of her head before he once again shot a quick look over to Mia and noticed that she was still smiling softly and looking happy. He closed his eyes and sighed to himself.

He needed to make a choice and very soon.

Hermione, on the other hand, was happy that her best friend had let down her guard and was finally talking to Hunter without glaring at him. Hermione didn't know what it was that drew Mia to Hunter but she just knew deep inside of her that Hunter was good for Mia – that he would be able to help her.

Hermione frowned softly when she saw that Cedric was watching Mia and Hunter with an unreadable look on his face and sighed to herself before shaking her head. She knew that Cedric really liked Mia and just hoped that Mia wasn't going to be hurt in the process.

"Hermione?" a male voice cut into her thoughts and she turned around to see Harry staring at her with an amused expression on his face.

"Sorry?" Hermione asked and Harry grinned.

"Where were you?" Harry asked. "I've been calling your name for the last two minutes and you didn't even hear me." Hermione blushed softly before she let out a soft laugh.

“Sorry, I had a lot on my mind,” she told him before her eyes were drawn toward Mia and Hunter once more and saw that Mia was looking at Hunter with a curious look on her face as he told her something. “What do you think of Hunter?”

Harry frowned, curious about Hermione’s thoughts and change of subject before he turned to see that Mia and Hunter were having a conversation. He sighed.

“I think that he is actually a good guy but Mia is just cautious about letting him close to her,” Harry told Hermione. She nodded in agreement before a soft frown marred her face.

Harry couldn’t help but reach out and rubbed his thumb over the crease in between her brows and she turned to face him, startled. “Sorry,” Harry apologised with a sheepish grin. “I just don’t like seeing you frown.”

Hermione smiled softly again before she leaned in and rested her head on Harry’s shoulder as they watched the people dance while Harry wrapped an arm around her waist, holding her close to him.

Hunter looked down at Mia’s necklace and smiled softly before he looked at Mia’s bowed head.

“That’s a nice necklace,” Hunter stated casually and Mia raised her head before she looked back down at the necklace.

“Thanks,” Mia told him. “I got it for my Christmas from a secret admirer.” Hunter raised an eyebrow at that statement before he whistled softly.

“He must really care about you if he gave that to you,” Hunter told her before he eyed the necklace. “I saw something like that in a shop and it was quite expensive.”

“Really?” Mia asked half shocked and half curious. Hunter nodded.

“Yep – you must have really attracted his attention if he bought you that,” Hunter told her.

“Oh,” she whispered to herself before she looked at the necklace and saw the crystal glitter slightly under the light. Suddenly the glow changed to a soft pinkish colour with a slight red hue before it changed back to its normal blue colour – one that was the same as her eyes.

Mia frowned softly when she saw it change colour before an idea came to her and she brought her head up and looked at Hunter, who was staring over her head.

“Hunter...” Mia started and Hunter looked down at her. “Did you buy me the necklace?”

The song came to a stop, causing the lights to come on and the students to applaud the band while Hunter and Mia just stared at each other. Finally a soft smile crossed Hunter’s face as he stood back from Mia and lifted her hand.

Hunter kissed the back of it before he leaned in and kissed her cheek.

“Thanks for the dance Mia,” he told her and walked off, leaving her alone in the middle of the floor, breathless and her heart thumping heavily.

“Mia?” a female voice interrupted her thoughts and she felt a soft hand on her elbow. Turning, she saw Hermione standing there, looking concerned. “Are you okay?”

Mia looked past Hermione’s shoulder and saw that Hunter was leaving the Great Hall altogether before she turned her dazed blue eyes toward Hermione.

“I think I might be in trouble,” Mia admitted. Hermione just looked at her best friend before she looked over her shoulder then back at her best friend once more.

“Physically or emotionally?” Hermione asked and a soft smile laced with fear crossed Mia’s face.

“Emotionally,” Mia admitted and understanding dawned on Hermione as she stared back at her best friend.

“Do you want to talk about it?” Hermione asked. “I can tell Harry that we need to go back to the common room.”

“No!” Mia burst out, startling Hermione. Mia shook her head, giving Hermione a soft smile. “No, it’s okay. We can talk later. This is a dance – we came here to dance.” Hermione just smiled at Mia curiously before Harry came up behind her and looked at them with concern shining in his green eyes.

“Is everything okay?” Harry asked and Mia replied just before Hermione did.

“Yes,” Mia told him and Harry nodded, slightly taken back by his sister’s over excited attitude. “It looks like there is another song coming on – why don’t you two go and dance?”

“Mia...” Hermione started but Mia cut her off with a soft look.

“I’ll be okay Hermione, we can talk later,” Mia assured her and Hermione gave in with a soft nod before she turned to Harry. “I’ll catch you later.”

Mia walked off toward the table where the cups and the drinks were to quench her thirst. She was about to pick up a cup when a soft hand cupped her elbow and a hot breath met her ear.

“Mia, it’s time,” a male voice whispered in her ear and Mia nodded as she moved over toward the stage and spoke to the main band member. He nodded as he pointed to the microphone, causing Mia to nod and speak to him a little bit longer before he stood to the side and allowed Mia to step up on to the stage, attracting a lot of attention.

Everyone but Harry and Hermione looked toward Mia with a curious look on their faces while Mia gave them all a soft smile.ermHermihhhhh

Mia stood at the microphone and winked at Draco before turning to face Harry and Hermione, who moved to the middle of the dance floor.

"This is my mother's favourite song, so I'm dedicating it to her," Mia stated before she closed her eyes as the music started to float around the room.

#I can feel the magic floating in the air/Being with you gets me that way

I watch the sunlight dance across your face and I've/Never been this swept away#

Harry and Hermione just stared at each other as they continued to sway in each other arms.

#All my thoughts just seem to settle on the breeze#

Mia opened her eyes and looked at everyone on the dance floor below her. Harry and Hermione were locked in an embrace. Ron was dancing with Parvati and winked at Mia, who grinned and winked back, not once breaking her song.

#when I'm lying wrapped up in your arms/The whole world just fades away

The only thing I hear/Is the beating of your heart

'Cause I can feel you breathe/It's washing over me

Suddenly I'm melting into you/There's nothing left to prove

Baby all we need is just to be/Caught up in the touch

The slow and steady rush/Baby, isn't that the way that love's supposed to be

I can feel you breathe/Just breathe

In a way I know my heart is waking up/As all the walls come tumbling down

I'm closer than I've ever felt before/And I know

And you know/There's no need for words right now

'Cause I can feel you breathe/It's washing over me

Suddenly I'm melting into you/There's nothing left to prove

Baby all we need is just to be/Caught up in the touch

The slow and steady rush/Baby, isn't that the way that love's supposed to be

I can feel you breathe/Just breathe

Caught up in the touch/The slow and steady rush

Baby, isn't that the way that love's supposed to be

I can feel you breathe/Just breathe

I can feel the magic floating in the air/Being with you gets me that way#

“Do you want to go outside?” Harry asked and Hermione nodded as they pulled away from the dance with linked hands and walked out of the Great Hall. Mia stepped down from the stage and moved over to the drinks table, where Draco was filling his cup with punch.

Mia reached the table and grabbed a cup herself and filled it up with punch as Draco leaned in slightly.

“Good going,” Draco praised Mia and got a nod in return.

“Just slap a pair of wings on me, hand me a crossbow and call me cupid,” Mia stated as she lifted her cup and both of them tapped the rim of their cups together before turning back to the scene.

While that was happening, Dumbledore watched with a dark look and a nagging thought came to his mind about exactly why Mia and Draco would be talking.

TBC

Chapter 12: Walks, Problems and Bed.

Harry and Hermione made their way over to the lake while Hermione played with the rose that Harry had plucked from a rose bush along the way.

Hermione placed her head on Harry's shoulder and smiled softly when she felt Harry press a kiss to her head as they came to a stop next to the lake. Hermione lifted her head and gazed out at the scene.

"Beautiful night," Hermione murmured as she looked over at the full moon shining in the sky and reflecting off the calm water.

"Yeah," Harry murmured as he looked at Hermione. She looked gorgeous in the moonlight, especially with her eyes glowing with happiness and wonderment.

He leaned over and kissed her gently on the cheek before pulling away slightly. Hermione turned her face and Harry leaned back in again, this time kissing her lips. He started on her bottom lip and moved up slowly to her upper one, putting as much as he could into caressing them with his own. Hermione moaned as she lifted a hand up and cupped his cheek while the other hand fisted in his robes, holding on as Harry opened his mouth slightly and traced his tongue over hers, begging for entrance.

Hermione gasped slightly, allowing Harry's tongue to enter and stroke hers and the top of her mouth. Harry slid a hand into her hair and the other to her waist. He pressed himself closer to her and felt Hermione slip her hand into his hair as he had done to her. She held him close as she stretched up on her toes as they continued to explore each other until the need for air screamed in their brains.

They both pulled away slowly. Harry just laid his head on her forehead as they both stared into each other eyes.

"Wow," Hermione whispered and Harry smiled dreamily in agreement. They heard the music getting louder and Harry let out a soft chuckle as they both started swaying to it. Harry leaned in once again and kissed her softly as they continued to move in a circle in the moonlight.

Meanwhile, back inside the castle, Cedric had left Cho with her friends and looked around for Mia. Once he spotted her he made his way over to the table.

"Hey Mia," greeted Cedric. Mia turned around and saw Cedric standing there and smiled softly.

"Hey, are you having a good time?" Mia asked and Cedric nodded.

"Yeah," Cedric told her before his eyes caught sight of Hunter talking to one of his friends. Cedric turned back to face Mia, who was filling up her cup with juice. "So, what's going on with you and Hunter?" Cedric asked, startling Mia, who looked up from her cup.

"What do you mean?" Mia asked.

"You were dancing with him – last I heard you were being pretty chilly with him," Cedric told her and Mia arched an eyebrow at Cedric's description. Then her eyes narrowed as she thought about what he had said.

"How do you know how I was acting with Hunter before?" Mia asked.

"It's Hogwarts - nothing stays a secret for long," Cedric told her and Mia nodded. "So, what is going on with you two?"

"God Cedric – Hunter and I just danced and had a nice talk," Mia informed him. "Since when is that against the law?"

"I'm just curious," Cedric told her but Mia shook her head, sensing that there was more to it than he was telling.

"Nope – that's not it," Mia informed her and Cedric sighed.

"Fine – I'm jealous. I don't like the fact that you were dancing with another man," Cedric told her and Mia planted her hands on her hips, annoyed.

"Why are you jealous? There is no reason to be jealous; we are not dating. I'm free to do whatever I want and dance with whoever I want to," Mia informed him heatedly.

“Mia, we flirt all the time!” Cedric hissed at her but Mia wasn’t having it.

“I’m sorry Cedric but that’s just it. We are flirting partners but we are not dating. Besides – I’m not jealous of you and Cho, so you shouldn’t be jealous of me and Hunter,” Mia informed him.

“Mia…” Cedric started but Mia cut him off.

“Cedric – you have no right to be jealous and you know it,” Mia told him. “If I want dance with him, then I will – I’m here solo remember, meaning I’m free.” Cedric was about to open his mouth when Mia’s eyes slipped over his shoulder and softened slightly. She shook her head and turned back to the table. But Cedric looked over his shoulder and saw that Hunter was looking at Mia was a soft look of his own before turning back to his friends.

Cedric shook his head to clear it as he turned back to say more to Mia when Mia interrupted him.

“You better go back to Cho – I think she wants another dance,” Mia told him and he turned to see Cho looking at him with a soft smile. He looked down and saw that Mia was smiling softly at him before she pushed him gently. “Go on – it’s obvious that she fancies you.”

Cedric let out a small sigh before he walked away over to Cho, leaving Mia alone with relief running through her.

It was better, really – she couldn’t be with anyone, especially not Hunter. And she didn’t want to be one of those women who used a person just to feel safe. She turned back to the table only to arch an eyebrow when she saw Snape leaving with Karkaroff and she turned to look at Draco, only to see that he had seen it too.

Draco caught her eyes and nodded. He turned his face and lifted his hand up to his mouth and softly spoke into it while Mia looked around at the students only to see that Dumbledore was looking at her and Draco with a frown on his face. She caught on before smirking.

It looked like Dumbledore was going to be making a fool out of himself later. She would bet her bedroom on it.

“Harry, Snape and Karkaroff are heading out of the Great Hall. Karkaroff seemed worried about something while Snape was angry. Watch out for them,” Draco’s voice came out from Harry’s earpiece. Hermione looked over Harry’s shoulder to see that the two people had stepped outside near their area and she leaned her cheek into Harry’s hand, placing her mouth near the microphone.

“We have them,” Hermione told them both and Harry nodded.

Harry and Draco had agreed to put the microphones on the night before so that way they were still in contact with each other no matter what. The girls couldn’t wear anything like it because they were wearing dresses so they had agreed that each girl would stay in sight of each man.

At first they had debated on how they were going to stay in contact during the ball when Draco had pulled out the microphones they had worn during the Quidditch Cup. They had created the small microphones after watching a movie that had put them to good use and agreed that it would be a better way to stay in contact with some amount of stealth. It was similar to the two-way mirror, but of course without the picture.

“Snape looks pissed,” Harry stated as they continued to dance slowly. Hermione nodded as Harry extended his arm and spun her around and brought her back to his body.

Hermione couldn’t help the soft laugh as he did this as she watched Snape search over the carriages, chasing off every student he found making out in them.

Harry and Hermione hurried over to the wall and peered around the corner to watch Snape and Karkaroff argue. Karkaroff had his sleeve rolled back and was showing him something on his arm.

“It wasn’t like that earlier and you know what it means!” Karkaroff snapped at Snape, who glared back at him.

“It means nothing,” Snape snarled but Karkaroff shook his head.

“I will be killed if I go!” Karkaroff informed Snape and Snape glared in response.

“Fine – make your excuses and flee like the coward you are. Excuse me if I don’t do the same!” Snape snarled at him.

Both men had a staring match before Karkaroff muttered angrily under his breath, pulled down his sleeve, and walked off.

Snape continued staring at the back of Karkaroff before he shook his head and turned to stalk back off into the castle.

Harry’s eyes widened in understanding over what had Karkaroff in a worried state.

“The dark mark,” Harry whispered in understanding and Hermione looked at him in shock before she looked the spot where the two men had been once more.

“Voldemort,” she whispered.

Meanwhile, back inside the castle, everyone was having the time of their lives, dancing or eating or having fun with their friends.

Ron leaned against the wall as he watched the people dance with a soft smile on his face. He had seen Harry and Hermione leave the Great Hall and knew that they were finally going to take that step into a true relationship – much to his pleasure. Maybe now his sanity would be saved, he thought to himself amusingly.

Ron looked toward Mia and frowned to himself slightly – he had seen what she was like when she dancing with Hunter and was curious to what was going on there. It seemed like, to him, that Mia was keeping herself away from anything resembling a relationship and it made him worry.

Mia tried to hide it, but was full of love and he didn’t want to see her fight herself like this. He had watched as Cedric made his way over to Mia and how she had looked sad underneath before sighing to himself.

He couldn't help but feel that if Mia got involved with Cedric that she would experience pain. While he didn't want that for Mia, he knew that he had to let her make her own mistakes - but it didn't mean that he couldn't push and nudge Mia on a certain path.

Ron closed his eyes as he thought back to the time when the trio had admitted their secret to him – that they were elementals.

“So, you're elementals?!” Ron asked excitedly. They were all sitting underneath the tree the day after Harry and Mia had been released from the hospital.

“Yes,” Mia told him. “I'm air, Hermione's water and Harry is fire.”

“What about earth?” Ron asked.

Harry, Hermione and Mia shared a look before they looked at Ron.

“We know who is earth but we can't tell you – they are under cover for us at the moment and we can't risk anything changing, especially your reactions toward them,” Harry explained and Ron nodded – not feeling hurt.

They had explained their actions toward Dumbledore and everything they had been through and Ron knew that the person's life would depend on keeping their secret safe.

“So – can you do anything with your powers yet?” Ron asked.

“You saw my air shield,” Mia reminded him before she scrunched her nose. “Won't be doing that again anytime soon – that really took a lot out of me.”

“I can start fires... I'm working up to fire balls but they take my total concentration still,” Harry explained.

“I can create water balls,” Hermione told Ron as she demonstrated. She held out her hand, palm up, and her eyes flashed blue for a slight moment as water formed itself into a ball hovering a few inches above her hand.

"Oh...cool," Ron exclaimed as he lifted a hand and slipped his index finger into the water before smiling softly. "That's brilliant!"

"I'm working on turning them into ice but it's harder than it seems," Hermione admitted but Ron waved it off.

"Hermione – you're the smartest one to enter Hogwarts in ages – you'll get it in time, no doubt about it," Ron told her and Hermione blushed slightly as she closed her hand.

"Are you okay about it?" Harry asked and Ron nodded.

"I'm great about it! I can boast that my best friends are elementals – I mean, you don't get to see that very often you know," Ron told them, causing them to laugh. "Don't worry – you have my promise that I'll keep this a secret... but can I watch you as you practice?"

"Sure – it'll be better to have a fresh pair of eyes with us – you can tell us what we are missing," Mia told him and Ron nodded.

Ron opened his eyes as he came back to reality and smiled when he saw his date, Parvati, dancing with Neville.

Ron had begged off dancing after five straight dances with the girl. She had laughed and told him to take a break before she went off and found someone else to dance with her.

Ron remembered the time when Hermione had told him that he was an encourager. He had been confused at first until Hermione had explained that each element needed someone to ground them when they were using their powers to encourage them to reach their potential. Ron had been pleased to find out that he had such an important job only to find out that he was the spiritual element encourager and that none of them knew who that was.

Ron had found it hilarious that they had found the encourager before they had found the elemental. Mia hadn't found her encourager yet and Harry and Hermione had found out that they were each others'.

"Hello Ronald," a familiar female voice spoke and Ron turned to see Luna standing next to him. Ron couldn't help the soft smile that

crossed his face. There was something about Luna that made him want to know more about her.

“Hello Luna, are you having a good time?” Ron asked and Luna smiled softly.

“Yes, thank you – are you?” Luna asked and Ron nodded.

“Yeah, I’m having a great time,” Ron told her just as a soft song came on and he held out his hand. “Would you like to dance?” Luna's smile broadened as she placed her hand into his.

“I would like that,” she told him. Ron led the way out onto the dance floor and they both started dancing.

Harry and Hermione were making their way over to the bushes after they had watched Snape and Karkaroff leave the grounds. They heard a familiar rough male voice and stopped in place.

“Is that...” Harry started.

“Hagrid,” Hermione confirmed.

They were about to move forward when they heard a female voice and they both froze on the spot and turned to each other.

“Let’s go,” Harry whispered and Hermione nodded in agreement. They froze on the spot however when they heard the female let out a scandalised gasp and heatedly informing Hagrid that she wasn’t a half-giant and that she just had big bones.

Hermione winced when she heard Hagrid arguing back before stomping sounds indicated that Hagrid and the female had left.

“Well, that was informative,” Harry told Hermione, who just continued to stare at Harry before she nodded.

“Let’s get back to the castle – it seems like the ground out here is a meeting spot for everyone tonight,” Hermione told him, causing Harry to laugh in agreement as they made their way out of the bushes and hurried up to the castle.

They were about to make their way up the stairs when another male voice stopped them.

“Harry,” they turned to see Cedric standing there with Cho. “Can I speak to you for a second?” Harry turned to Hermione.

“Can you wait a second?” Harry asked to Hermione. She nodded as she watched Harry hurry over to Cedric, who was waiting patiently. “What’s up?” Harry asked.

“Have you sorted out your clue for the egg yet?” Cedric asked after they had separated a little from the others. Harry shook his head. “Alright – listen, what you have to do is go underwater with it. You can use the prefect's bathroom - the password is 'pine fresh'.”

“Okay, do I need someone with me or do I just go alone?” Harry asked. Cedric shrugged.

“It’s up to you,” he looked over his shoulder to see that Cho was getting a little impatient. “Listen, I have to go – oh, by the way, congratulations on you and Hermione... it’s about time.” Cedric shot Harry a grin before he walked off. Harry couldn’t help but smile before he walked back over to Hermione.

“What was that about?” Hermione asked as Harry wrapped an arm around her waist. Harry looked down at her.

“He was just helping me with the clue for the egg,” Harry told her before placing a kiss on her forehead. “Now, let’s get back to the common room so we can relax.” Hermione giggled as they made their way up the stairs.

Mia was also heading back to the Gryffindor common room when she bumped into a blonde, startling them both.

“Oh! I’m sorry,” Mia told her but the blonde shook it off.

“It’s okay Mia,” the blonde told her. Mia was startled that this girl knew her name.

“You know me?” Mia asked and the blonde smiled.

“I’m Luna Lovegood. I’m in Ravenclaw and a year younger than you,” Luna explained. Mia nodded as Luna’s blue eyes landed on the necklace and widened slightly. “Oh my, a true love necklace.”

“Excuse me?” Mia asked curiously and Luna pointed to the necklace.

“That is a true love necklace – it is rumoured that when you meet your true love it will change colour until you admit that you are in love with the person,” Luna explained. “I never thought I would see one.”

Mia touched her necklace as the memory of it changing colours during her dance with Hunter. Her heart started thumping harder.

“True love?” Mia croaked out and Luna nodded.

“Yes – it’s a wonderful thing,” Luna told her before she shook her head. “Mind you to watch out for the dreamers – they like to steal your dreams and make you follow the wrong path.” With that, Luna made her way to her own common room while humming a soft song under her breath, leaving Mia alone.

Mia just stared after Luna as fear coiled in her stomach. She looked down at the necklace once more.

What she was going to do?

TBC

Chapter 13: Problems, Papers and Annoyance.

Harry found himself in the Headmaster's office a few days after the Ball. He couldn't believe what he was hearing.

Dumbledore had approached Harry to warn him about Mia's behaviour towards Draco Malfoy and it had concerned him that Mia was allying herself with Draco behind Harry's back.

"Headmaster," Harry cut in, interrupting Dumbledore's theory of Mia and Draco's meeting with an irritated look. "Whatever Mia was doing with Malfoy, I'm pretty sure that she has a good explanation for it. You don't have the right to make assumptions about her. Now, if you excuse me, I'm going back to my common room." Harry got up from his seat and moved over to the door to leave.

"She is betraying you, Harry," Dumbledore told him as Harry left the office, closing the door firmly behind him.

Mia was laughing like mad as she clutched onto the arm of her chair so she wouldn't fall off it. Tears were running down her face as she tried to breathe, but kept erupting into more laughter.

Harry and Hermione were sitting on the couch, watching her with amused expressions. Harry had come back from Dumbledore's office and told them why Dumbledore had wanted to see him, causing Mia's current difficulty.

"I know everyone says he is wise and all that, but he really is pretty dense," Hermione stated to Harry while Mia slipped out of her seat and landed on the floor, still laughing.

"If she keeps this up, she'll burst her gut," Harry muttered while shaking his head.

"What did you expect?" Hermione asked. "Every time Dumbledore tries to convince you that Mia is betraying you it always backfires on him."

"And she loves it!" Harry exclaimed, waving his hand over at his sister.

Mia soon managed to calm herself down enough to get re-settled into her seat only to wince when a sore spot sent pain straight through her body.

“Oh man, I think I pulled a muscle,” Mia moaned as she rubbed her stomach before shaking her head. “I knew that he was going to make a fool out of himself, but I didn’t think it would be this bad!”

“How do you mean?” Hermione asked curiously, wondering what aspect Mia was talking about, and Mia grinned.

“When Draco and I spotted Snape and Karkaroff going out – I saw Dumbledore looking between Draco and me and I knew that he had spotted us talking – all I had to do was wait to see if he would make a fool out of himself,” Mia explained and Harry rolled his eyes in amusement.

“And you didn’t bother warning me, thanks,” Harry remarked, sarcastically but got a shrug from Mia.

“Sorry – I couldn’t give anything away. I didn’t know if he would approach you or just leave it alone so I couldn’t risk him finding out that I had caught on to him at the ball,” Mia explained and Harry nodded in understanding.

Hermione let out a soft yawn before she looked at her watch.

“We’d better get off to bed. I’m tired, and we have to get up early tomorrow,” Hermione reminded them, getting nods of agreement from them both.

Ron had already gone to bed an hour ago because he had had a tiring day. Harry gave Hermione a soft goodnight kiss before kissing Mia’s forehead and headed into the room that he shared with the other boys while Mia and Hermione made their way up to their rooms.

Once they had gotten ready, Hermione sat cross-legged on her bed, facing Mia. Questions burned in her mind.

Mia looked at her curiously as she too sat cross-legged on the bed.

“So – what is going on with you?” Hermione asked and Mia sighed.

“Cedric’s jealous,” Mia informed Hermione, who arched an eyebrow at her.

“How do you mean?” Hermione asked and Mia sighed again.

“He wasn’t happy with me dancing with Hunter at the ball and he made it very clear,” Mia informed Hermione with an angry undertone.

“What us going on with you and Hunter?” Hermione asked and Mia shrugged as she picked at the covers.

“We just danced and talked Hermione, nothing more,” Mia told her and Hermione nodded.

“But you want it to be more,” Hermione guessed, causing Mia to look at Hermione with a shocked look on her face before she nodded softly.

“Yeah,” Mia admitted. “But I can’t be with him – not now. Everything is just clashing with each other at the moment and my emotions are all over the place. The last thing I need is boyfriend.” Hermione felt her heart go heavy at Mia’s statement before she shifted in closer to Mia and wrapped an arm around her shoulders, bringing Mia into a hug.

“You can’t do this to yourself – if you want to be with Hunter, then you should,” Hermione told her but Mia shook her head stubbornly.

“No!” Mia looked at Hermione with a wild look in her eyes. “I can’t! I can’t do that to him – no, I can wait till everything is over before I even think about starting a relationship.”

“Mia...” Hermione started but Mia shook her head.

“I’ll be fine – I can deal with not having a boyfriend,” she sighed before shaking her head. “I’m not even sure if I can deal with *having* a boyfriend right now.” Hermione laughed softly at this.

“Let’s go to sleep – maybe it’ll seem more clear in the morning,” Hermione suggested and Mia nodded as they both slipped under the

covers of their beds. Hermione switched the light off and closed her eyes.

"Hermione," Mia whispered and heard Hermione's shift of her head in Mia's direction. "The necklace I got for Christmas changed colour – it went a light pink. A girl later told me that it was a *true love* necklace and that it would change colour whenever I was in the presence of my true love," Mia explained and Hermione frowned.

"Who did it changed colour with?" Hermione asked.

"Hunter," Mia whispered and Hermione felt her eyes widen softly at the confession while Mia just stared out of the window at the full moon.

Harry made his way into the Great Hall the next morning, eager to start the day. Hermione was sitting at her usual spot at the table, alternating between reading and eating. Harry couldn't stop the soft smile that crossed his face as he moved closer to the table and sat down next to her and kissed her cheek.

Hermione let out a soft sigh as she turned around and smiled at Harry.

"Morning," Hermione greeted and Harry moved in and kissed her softly on the lips, saying good morning as well before he pulled away and filled up his plate. Hermione turned back to the paper and resumed her reading.

"Anything interesting today?" Harry asked and Hermione sighed angrily as she turned the paper towards Harry so he could see the front page headline. His jaw dropped in shock at what he saw. "What the hell?"

Harry took the paper from her and looked at it more closely. "Dumbledore's Big Mistake" screamed at him and he read how Hagrid had revealed that he was a half giant - his mother being a full blooded giant and his father a human.

"How the hell did she hear about this?" Harry hissed to Hermione. "We never saw her there."

“I know – it’s making me wonder if she is getting onto the grounds in some other way,” Hermione whispered back as the students’ voices started getting louder as they too read the paper. Many were shooting looks over at Harry and Hermione. “Oh, poor Hagrid – I hope he doesn’t find out about this.”

“I want to know how the hell she found out – she isn’t allowed on Hogwarts grounds anymore after the problems she created when she spread those lies about us,” Harry reminded her.

“What’s going on?” Mia asked as she made her way next to Harry and Hermione only to find that everyone was looking at her. “Am I dressed wrong or did I not do my hair properly?” she looked down at her clothing and found that she was dressed normally in her skirt and shirt with a tie. She felt her hair and found that it was up in its clasp.

“Hagrid’s a half giant,” Hermione informed her as Mia sat down and Mia nodded.

“I kinda guess that after we first met him – he is a little large,” Mia told them as she filled her plate. Harry snorted as he lifted the paper and showed the headline, shocking Mia.

Mia took the paper from his hands and brought it closer to her. When she caught the reporter’s name she frowned.

“How did she find out about this?” Mia demanded. “I hardly think Hagrid is going to go out and tell her!”

“We think she somehow snuck into the grounds but we didn’t see her,” Hermione admitted and Mia sighed. She cupped her cheek with her hand, leaning her elbow on the table as she placed the paper down and shook her head softly.

The students hadn’t stopped looking towards them while whispering to each other. Mia knew that they would be expecting her to lose her temper, but she couldn’t gather up the energy for it – everything had been taking a lot out of her lately and she found herself limited to just wishing that Rita would drop dead somewhere.

“Ha! I knew that there was something wrong with Hagrid!” an annoying female voice – one that had the potential to ruin Mia’s day-spoke up. Mia sighed as she pushed her plate away and placed her head on her arms that were crossed in front of her.

“Shut up Pansy,” a male voice snapped, causing Mia to snap her head up and look towards the speaker along with the other students. She was shocked that the voice had come from Hunter. “Just because you don’t like Hagrid, doesn’t mean that the rest of us don’t.”

“Wolfe...” Pansy was about to snap back but backed down when she saw a hard glint in Hunter’s eyes.

“If you value your life, you will keep that big fat mouth of yours shut. Just because you are a pureblood doesn’t make you better than the rest of us,” Hunter informed her as he stood up. “Just dumb enough that you willingly bow down to Voldemort.” With that, Hunter left the Great Hall with everyone watching him in a stunned silence.

Soon, the silence was broken by the hushed whispers of the females, excited over how Hunter had cut Pansy down so quickly and how hot that it had been.

Mia looked toward Hermione and saw that Hermione had raised an eyebrow in her direction before Mia shook her head.

“I’m gonna go to the library – I need to get a book for one of my lessons,” Mia told them as she grabbed a stack of toast and wrapped it in a napkin before grabbing a red apple and walked out of the Great Hall.

Harry and Hermione turned to face each other before they turned back to their food though similar thoughts were running around in their heads.

Mia made her way into the library. She waved to Madam Pince before she headed towards the index file and flicked through it. When she found the card that contained the details of the book that she needed, she went over to the back of the library where the book should be shelved.

Once Mia had reached the bookcase, she noticed that the book was at the top shelf, lying on its side. Frustration ran through her when she realised that she had to stand on her tiptoes just to hopefully reach the book as it was forbidden to use a chair to reach them.

She stretched up and tried to move her hand about until she could feel the edge of the book and strained to slip her fingers over the edge.

While she was doing this, her mind had wandered to Cedric and Hunter before a soft frown covered her face. She couldn't believe that Cedric was jealous that she had danced with Hunter and it bothered her to no end that Cedric felt he had the right. They weren't dating – they flirted, yes, but how did that regress into dating? And that Cedric had the right to think that she shouldn't dance with anyone but him?

Her thoughts went over to Hunter and she couldn't help the soft confused smile that crossed her face before she sighed.

Hermione was right – she really did want to date Hunter, but she couldn't. Not with the danger right over the horizon. She knew that Harry's participation was a complete setup and she needed to find out who had done it and why.

Oh, she knew that Voldemort was the main reason, but what could they possibly gain by using Harry in the tasks? Hunter's face swarmed across in her memory as she stretched even higher only to feel the book slipping away from her.

Frowning, Mia strained even harder to reach the book as she thought about Hunter. She didn't understand why her body was determined to be close to him. She dreamt of kissing him nearly every night and it was driving her up the wall – surely her body knew that she didn't have time to deal with a boyfriend and keep her brother safe at the time!

Girls may be able to multi-task but not that much! Mia sighed. Hunter was constantly on her mind and she hated her body rebelling against her and a dream appeared in her mind.

Mia was resting her back against the bookcase as she read a book that was in her hands only for someone to take the book away, startling her. She looked up and saw Hunter standing in front of her with that serious look in his eyes that always made her breathless. A mischievous smirk crossed his face and he leaned down and kissed her softly.

Mia couldn't help the soft moan that escaped her as Hunter slipped his hands onto her hips and pulled her close to him before slipping them around to her back.

Mia's hands slipped up his arms, feeling the muscles under his clothes before they wrapped themselves around his neck, holding on tight as he pressed her against the bookcase.

There was a small thud and a now empty space where her hand was searching, snapping Mia out of her day dreams. She heard a pained groan and a muffled curse.

Mia looked around the bookcase only to arch an eyebrow when she saw Hunter rubbing his head with one hand. The other hand was holding the book that she was trying to reach and understanding dawned on her.

Hunter looked and spied her at the end of the bookcase and his eyes narrowed.

"I assume *you* are the reason why this book decided to drop on my head?" Hunter asked dryly and Mia grinned.

"Yeah – sorry about that. It was a little too high up for me," Mia admitted as she rounded the bookcase and moved closer to him. She took the book from his extended hand before wincing. "Will you be okay or do you need to see the nurse?"

A look of panic crossed his face at the mention of the nurse and he shook his head.

"Nah – I'll be fine," Hunter assured her and Mia nodded before she reached up and lightly pressed her index finger on the bruise and watched as Hunter winced before moving away from her.

“Right – you’ll be fine,” Mia repeated, sarcastically before rolling her eyes and she took his elbow. *“Come on – I’ll take you to the nurse, you might have a concussion or something serious.”*

Mia led Hunter over to the checkout counter and checked out her book before she led Hunter out of the library altogether.

“I’ll be fine!” Hunter protested. *“It’s just a small bump!”* Mia scoffed with disbelief.

“Hunter – this book weighs a ton,” Mia motioned toward the book and Hunter could see that it was a volume and grimaced. *“It did more than a small bump and you need to get it checked out!”*

“But...” Hunter started but was cut off when Mia shot him a warning glare and stayed quiet, knowing that she could fully well knock him out and drag him to the hospital wing if that was what it took.

They reached the hospital wing, Mia pushed the door open and ushered Hunter through before closing the door behind her and they moved closer to the nurse’s office when Madam Pomfrey stuck her head out of the doorway to see who had entered her domain.

“Mia? Hunter?” Madam Pomfrey asked, curious to why the two of them were here.

“A book dropped on Hunter’s head – I pressed lightly on the bump and it’s sore – Hunter is protesting that he is fine,” Mia explained and Madam Pomfrey nodded as she took Hunter by the arm.

“How did that happen?” Madam Pomfrey asked, curious to what had caused the book to drop on Hunter’s head.

“I accidentally pushed a book over the edge of the bookcase and it fell on top of his head,” Mia explained as she followed Madam Pomfrey and Hunter as Madam Pomfrey led him over to an empty bed before sighing as Hunter sat down.

“How on earth did you manage that?” Madam Pomfrey asked as she looked down at the younger girl only to arch an eyebrow when she saw Mia blush softly.

It was a little high up for me to reach and I was kinda distracted,” Mia explained and Madam Pomfrey nodded in agreement before she turned back to Hunter.

Madam Pomfrey checked his head, pressing the bump at all different angles before she checked his eyes to make sure that the pupils were responding correctly before she headed into her office to get some medicine.

“You and Madam Pomfrey know each other very well,” Mia noticed and Hunter grinned.

“She is my teacher in a subject – she is the only one who can teach me the subject at the moment,” Hunter explained and Mia nodded, understanding that Hunter didn’t want to talk about it any further. “Beside – I could say the same about you two.”

Mia smiled softly as she brought her legs up and sat on the bed crossed legged before she looked toward the door that Madam Pomfrey had gone through.

“She’s been my rock last year,” Mia explained and she noticed Hunter’s curious expression. “My dad was on the run last year because everyone was still convinced that he was a murderer – I was pretty stressed out and Madam Pomfrey helped out when I was stressed.”

“At least he has been cleared now,” Hunter told her. “I bet it's a relief.” Mia let out a soft laugh.

“Yeah, it is,” Mia told him as she looked at him for a short moment before she cleared her throat and looked away before she got up from the bed. “Any way – you’re okay, right? I can leave now.”

“Mia...” Hunter started but Mia just interrupted him with a fake bright smile.

“I’m sorry for attacking you with the book but I really have got to go – I’ll see you around,” Mia told him before she walked away from him.

Hunter sighed softly to himself as he watched her walk away before looking out of the window. He missed that Mia had looked back at him with a soft look on her face before she left the hospital wing completely.

Harry and Hermione were down at the lake so that Hermione could get in some practice of elemental magic. Harry was setting the towels on the ground as he spoke to Hermione.

“Are you ready?” Harry asked as he turned around only to arch an eyebrow. “Hermione – you need to be fully submersed in the water.” Hermione raised her eyebrows as she stared at him.

“Are you *kidding* me?” Hermione asked from where she was knee deep in the water before shivering. “This water is *freezing*!”

“You need to learn how to warm the water around you,” Harry reminded her but got a glare in return. He made up his mind and slipped off his shoes and socks before rolling up his trousers and stepped into the water, wading over next to Hermione. “You can do it.”

“Oh, fine,” she muttered as she moved closer to the shore and stripped her clothes off, leaving her in the two piece bathing suit that she usually wore and moved back over to where Harry was standing.

Harry pulled off his shirt and threw it over to the shore before he nodded to Hermione and they both moved deeper into the water.

When the water reached their shoulders they turned to face each other.

“Okay – you’d want to concentrate on the water surrounding you, feeling it warm up around you,” Harry told her. Hermione nodded as she closed her eyes and concentrated.

Soon the water started to heat up and it bubbled softly, much to Harry’s pride and Hermione’s happiness of her achievement.

Hermione’s eyes snapped open with happiness and excitement as she looked at her boyfriend.

"I did it!" Hermione exclaimed and Harry grinned in happiness as well, happy to see that his girlfriend was making progress and that she was happy.

Harry couldn't help the physical pull towards her that ran through his body as he watched her. Her hair was wet and slicked down, and her brown eyes were shining with happiness and excitement as she slowly bounced in the water. Water drops slid down her face before they reached her lips, wetting them and making them look even more irresistible than usual.

Harry moved in and kissed her, wrapping his arms around her waist as she wrapped hers around his neck as they both floated in the water.

One of Hermione's hands slipped into his dark hair while the other one slid down his back as the kiss deepened. Harry's hands slipped into her curly locks while his other hand slipped down to her butt, holding her close to him as she opened her mouth under his.

The two of them were so involved in each other that they didn't notice the water surrounding them starting to glow a light pink and that someone was watching them from behind the tree that sat close to the lake.

"I have to go," Harry mumbled through their kisses a while later, but Hermione just let out a soft whine in the back of her throat that had Harry wrapping his arms around her waist and pulling her closer to him. He shook his head and once again tried to pull away. "I really have to go."

"Why?" Hermione moaned. "Don't you want to stay here with me?" she asked with a pout, one that had Harry sucking her bottom lip into his mouth before he groaned.

"I really want to stay here with you but I have another one of those stupid meetings to go to because I'm one of the champions," Harry reminded her and she let out a soft sigh as she pulled away from Harry.

“Oh, go on then – I don’t want anyone to get angry at you and to take up more of our time,” she told him and he nodded before he leaned in and kissed her briefly once more. He swam over to the shore, grabbed his towel and dried himself off. After he cast a drying charm on his jeans he pulled on his shirt and shoes on before blowing a kiss towards Hermione.

Hermione smiled and blew him a kiss back before he hurried off to the castle. She sighed to herself and floated on her back. She hated the champions meetings.

Hermione climbed out of the water after swimming a few laps. She made her way over to the tree where she had left her towel and clothes. She had picked up the towel to dry off when she heard someone walking toward her.

“Hermione,” a thick male voice called out and Hermione turned to see Viktor making his way over to her. She stifled an angry sigh as she wrapped the towel around her body – making sure that Viktor wasn’t going to see any parts of her that only she, Mia and Harry were allowed to see.

“Viktor,” Hermione greeted.

“How are you doing?” Viktor asked.

“Fine – what do you want?” Hermione asked; getting annoyed with Viktor’s stalking act.

“I just want you to know that I find you very beautiful,” Viktor told her as he moved closer. He reached out to touch her cheek but Hermione took a step back.

“Thank you but that's not very appropriate,” Hermione informed him coldly.

“What is going on with you and Harry?” Viktor asked and Hermione’s eyes hardened.

“He’s my *boyfriend* – not that it has anything to do with you,” Hermione informed him but Viktor grabbed her arm and was about to pull her closer to him when she snapped.

Hermione twisted her arm and planted her bare foot into his stomach, sending him flying backwards. He tripped over the ground and fell onto his butt.

“Don’t you ever touch me again. And don’t come near me again because if you do, I will put you in the hospital and you’ll be eating through a straw for the rest of your life!” Hermione hissed at him before she grabbed her clothes and shoes and stormed off, leaving Viktor lying on the ground.

Hermione was storming through the castle when a hand came down on her arm and she spun around with her fist flying towards her attacker only for it to be caught in quick hands.

Startled, Hermione looked and saw that Draco was holding her fist in his hand as he looked between her and her hand with a slight hint of fear.

“Note to self, do not touch you when you are pissed off,” Draco stated and Hermione gave a small sigh.

“Sorry Draco – I didn’t know it was you. I was just acting on instinct,” Hermione explained and Draco nodded. He waited a beat and Hermione sighed before she glared at Draco. “You can’t tell Harry.”

Draco arched an eyebrow at that, instantly knowing that something had really set Hermione off and that if Harry ever found out about it, it was going to mean torture for the person who had set Hermione off.

“Okay – but don’t blame me if Harry finds out and starts hunting us both down because you made me promise!” Draco told her and Hermione let out a soft laugh before she ran a hand through her hair.

“Viktor made a move on me,” she admitted and Draco winced. Forget torturing, Harry was going to be leaving bodies.

“What did he do?” Draco asked, protectiveness automatically coming into action. Hermione had become like a sister to him and he wasn’t going to stand by and allow some idiot place his hands on her.

“He started out telling me that he found me attractive but got a bit pissy when I told him that Harry and I are dating and that it had nothing to do with him,” Hermione admitted as she ran a hand over the arm that Viktor had grabbed.

Draco looked down at the movement only to pale slightly when he saw bruises forming. Hermione followed his gaze down only to see the bruises herself and she sighed.

“I think Harry will catch on, don’t you?” Draco asked and Hermione agreed.

“I don’t want Harry to know – he is already under enough stress as it is... he doesn’t need to worry about some idiot having a hard time with the word ‘no’,” Hermione told him but Draco wasn’t convinced.

“Hermione – you’re not acting normally. You’re gonna give yourself away to Harry the moment you see him,” Draco stated gently. Hermione sighed as she pulled her hand away from her arm and nodded softly.

“I know, but I want him to be calm when I tell him – not to go after Viktor with his wand in his hand,” Hermione explained but Draco was doubtful.

“I won’t tell him but if I was you, I would,” Draco told her. “If Viktor keeps coming up to you, Harry will want to know what he is doing – he’s already frustrated that Viktor won’t stop staring at you.”

Hermione gave a frustrated grunt of understanding before she nodded softly.

“I know – but I need to deal with my emotions first. I feel like just hitting something and that isn’t good at the moment,” Hermione told him and Draco nodded.

"You head on to the common room. I gotta send some letters. A few leads came up and I need to make sure that they are leads rather than dead ends," Draco told her and Hermione nodded her understanding. She continued walking while Draco made his way to the owlery.

Hermione stopped a few minutes later and looked over her shoulder when she thought she felt someone following her only to see that the hallway was empty. She frowned softly before she turned around and walked on to the common room.

Viktor looked round the hallway from where he was hiding against the wall and watched Hermione continue her walk. He frowned darkly and made his way over to Durmstrang guest area, thinking hard.

Harry was frustrated with everything. It turned out that the meeting had been changed and he had wasted all that time for nothing when he could have been with Hermione.

Harry stopped in his tracks when he saw Hermione sitting on the couch staring into the fire apparently lost in her thoughts. He could sense that something had changed since he had left her at the lake and he wondered what had happened.

As he moved closer to the couch he noticed that Hermione hadn't noticed him sitting next to her. With a troubled frown he gently shook her out of her thoughts and alerted her to his presence.

"Hermione?" Harry asked and she looked at him. "Are you okay?" Harry asked and Hermione sighed before shaking her head.

"Not right now but I will tell you later, I promise. I just want to unwind and forget the world exists right now," Hermione told him. Harry nodded as he lifted his arm in invitation. Hermione smiled softly and shifted closer to him. She rested her head on his shoulder and brought her legs up to curl on his lap. She closed her eyes as Harry brought his arm around her shoulders to hold her close and took comfort in his presence.

She concentrated on Harry's breathing and allowed the world to fade away so that Harry was the only thing her awareness acknowledged. She fell asleep on his shoulder, breathing in the scent that was Harry.

Harry leaned over and pressed a kiss to Hermione's hair when he realised that she had fallen asleep and smiled softly to himself. He shifted so that he was lying on the couch with Hermione curled into his side with her back to the couch. As he shifted, one of Hermione's hands slid across his stomach and up his chest until it covered his heart, where her fingers curled into his shirt, holding onto him.

Harry closed his eyes as he allowed reality to fall away and a sense of contentment to blanket him as he too drifted away into sleep.

Mia came in a few hours later and stopped when she saw the two on the couch and smiled softly to herself. She slipped a blanket over the two of them and removed Harry's glasses before she made her way up to her room so she could get a well deserved rest herself.

The next day, Hermione and Ron were in the pub in Hogsmeade drinking their butterbeer. They were waiting for Mia to come back from the bar and for Harry to meet up with them after he had finished his necessary shopping.

"So – what has been going on with you?" Ron asked. He had noticed that Hermione had been acting a little differently since she had come back yesterday. He also knew of Harry's concerns about it because Harry had confessed it to him early this morning.

"What do you mean?" Hermione asked as she turned dazed eyes toward Ron, who snorted softly in return.

"You've been acting funny since yesterday and Harry is worried about you," Ron told her and Hermione let out a soft sigh.

"It's complicated. I need to tell Harry first before I tell anyone else – I just need to sort out my own feelings first," Hermione explained and Ron nodded his understanding.

"Okay – but make sure you do it quick. Harry has been getting on my nerves with all the pacing he's been doing," Ron informed her and

Hermione gave him a distracted soft smile only for it to tighten quickly when she heard a familiar female voice.

Spinning around in her chair, Hermione's eyes sought out the voice's owner and her eyes hardened when she located her. Hermione got out of her chair and was marching over to the person so fast that Ron had to blink twice before he realised that she was gone.

"Hermione?" Ron questioned before he finished off his butterbeer and hurried over to catch up, but bumped into her when she came to a sudden halt.

"Well, well, well – look what the cat dragged in," Hermione remarked in a scathing voice – startling Ron with its venomous intensity. Never in his life has he ever heard Hermione speak in a tone like that.

Rita Skeeter looked up from her notepad and her lips curled into a sneer when she noticed who was talking to her.

"Hermione Granger – the same little girl who is playing around with Harry Potter's heart," Rita stated and Hermione snorted.

"Please – like Harry and I were going to fall for that rubbish," Hermione informed her. "And I'd thank you to stop spreading lies about our friends."

"And just who do you think you are to tell me what to do?" Rita asked as she stood up, eyeing Hermione up and down. "You are nothing but a muggleborn who doesn't belong in this world."

"Someone who can make your life hell if you don't stop spreading lies about our friends and family," Hermione informed her, not backing down at all.

"You don't want to mess with me little girly – I could tell you things that will make your hair curl," Rita eyed Hermione's hair with distaste. "Not that it needs it."

"More like I could tell tales about you that would curl anyone's hair, you spineless bug," Hermione retorted back with anger flashing in her eyes.

“Don’t threaten me... you have no idea who you are messing with,” Rita promised her but Hermione’s voice lowered an octave as she moved closer to Rita.

“No – you don’t have any idea who you are messing with,” Hermione promised her, her eyes darkening. “We don’t care what lies you sprout about us because we know the truth. But when you pick on a dear friend of ours – you better watch your back.”

“Hermione,” Ron called out as he placed a hand on Hermione’s shoulder to bring her back only yank his hand away from her when he felt the coldness seeping through his hand. Understanding hit him hard and fast. Hermione was turning herself cold and in the process, everyone near her was turning into an ice block. “Bloody hell,” he muttered under his breath as he hurried out of the pub and looked around for the one person who would be able to handle her.

“HARRY!” Ron shouted; startling the customers who were walking along the street. Harry popped his head out of a doorway and looked around for who had called his name but stopped once his eyes landed on Ron.

“Ron?” Harry asked curiously and Ron made ‘come here’ motions.

“It’s Hermione – she’s losing it!” Harry hurried out of the shop and made his way over to the pub and saw that his breath was visible due to Hermione’s iciness toward Rita.

“Hermione!” Harry called out as he made his way over to her. Once he was behind her he placed his hands on her shoulders and leaned in so that his mouth was placed near her ear. “Come on baby, we’ll get her later,” Harry whispered softly. He watched as Hermione’s eyes closed slightly and he kissed her cheek.

The room gradually grew warmer and everyone’s breath began to go back to normal. Hermione leaned into Harry’s body as he wrapped his arms around her waist, holding her close.

“Everything is fine, I’m here,” Harry promised her before he turned dark eyes on Rita and raised his voice for her to hear. “And if I were you, I’d stop spreading lies about everyone – karma has a big way of

biting people on the ass.” Rita scowled at Harry as he turned Hermione in his arms. “Watch your back from now on.” With that, he walked out with Hermione tucked in his arms, leaving everyone watching them walk away.

“Hey,” a bubbly female voice startled them and they all spun around to see Mia standing where Hermione used to be and she raised an eyebrow. “Sorry, didn’t mean to startle you.”

“Where the heck have *you* been?” Ron demanded and Mia frowned softly as she motioned toward the bar.

“I got caught up talking to someone, why?” Mia asked and Ron rolled his eyes.

“Hermione lost her temper in a big way – she started freezing the room out!” Ron explained and Mia raised her eyebrows, impressed. Ron shook his head in mock annoyance.

Harry came to a stop just outside the village and turned to face his girlfriend as she continued to stare out at the scenery before frowning softly.

“Hermione? What’s wrong?” Harry asked in a concerned voice. Hermione sighed and looked up at him.

“After you left me at the lake after our swimming lesson, Viktor came up to me,” Hermione told him and Harry’s eyes darkened. He had seen how Viktor had been looking at Hermione and so far Hermione had been dealing with it. But it was clear now that Viktor probably needed a... *harder...* message.

“What did he do?” Harry asked keeping his voice calm even though fires coursed through his body, demanding to be let out. Harry wasn’t a jealous person by nature because he trusted Hermione and knew that she wouldn’t cheat on him. But he didn’t like it when people hurt her.

“He was furious that you were my boyfriend and he grabbed my arm. I kicked him away from me and I warned him to leave me alone,” Hermione told him before shaking her head. “Harry...I get the feeling

that someone is following me but every time I look around, I don't see anyone. And Viktor keeps staring at me more and more."

Harry gathered Hermione into his arms, holding her close.

"It'll be okay – I'll talk to him, I promise," Harry told her and Hermione nodded as she rested her head on his chest and closed her eyes. Harry rested his head on top of hers as his green eyes lit up with fire behind them.

Later that night, Harry, Hermione, Mia and Ron found themselves in the common room. Harry was in deep thought over what Hermione had told him earlier when a male voice interrupted his brooding.

"Er guys," they turned to see Seamus standing behind them, fidgeting slightly.

"Seamus? What's wrong?" Mia asked as she moved closer to him, concerned.

"There is a rumour going around that Hagrid is not going to come back to teach his classes because of the story in the paper," Seamus explained.

"What?" Mia and Hermione demanded at the same time. Seamus nodded.

"You heard me – apparently Dumbledore has been getting letters from parents that he shouldn't be letting a half giant teach us," Seamus finished off with a bitter tone. He couldn't believe that people were more than willing to turn their back on others just because a reporter has spread exaggerated lies about people.

"What?" Ron demanded before he shook his head. "Come on, let's go and see if we can knock some sense into Hagrid." Ron trailed off when he found that the girls were already out of the common room, leaving Harry and Ron chasing after them.

As they moved closer to Hagrid's hut and they could see the light was on, indicating that Hagrid was still up.

“Rubeus Hagrid!” Mia shouted as she and Hermione banged their hands on the door. “Open this damn door before Hermione and I blast it off its hinges - and we will do it!” she promised.

“If you think we’re going to believe that Rita Skeeter bitch, then you are mistaken!” Hermione shouted. “We don’t care if you are a half giant or not! You’re still our friend!”

Mia and Hermione almost fell through the doorway when the door opened unexpectedly. It was only due to the quick reflexes of the boys grabbing them that they remained upright.

They looked up to see Professor Dumbledore standing there. “Professor Dumbledore!” Hermione squeaked slightly and Dumbledore gave them a smile before stepping back and revealed Hagrid sitting at the table.

“Hagrid!” they all shouted as the four of them made their way into the hut and surrounded him.

“You see Hagrid, not everyone cares that you’re a half giant,” Dumbledore stated.

“And if you don’t come back to class, we’re going on a strike,” Mia informed Hagrid, who gave her a smile.

“You really are just like your mother,” Hagrid told her and Mia grinned.

“Good,” Mia told him but turned back to the original conversation. “Are you coming back to work tomorrow or do I have to come down here tomorrow morning and drag you out of your house?”

“I’ll be there,” Hagrid told her and Mia nodded, satisfied.

“Good,” Mia told them and there was a small beeping sound, causing Hermione to look at her watch and grimace.

“We better get back up to school – it’s nearly curfew time,” Hermione told them and they nodded and said their goodbyes to Hagrid. They made their way out of the hut and up to the castle.

“Interesting kids,” Dumbledore noted and Hagrid nodded as he continued to watch the kids.

“Yes, they are amazing,” Hagrid stated, causing Dumbledore to look at him carefully before he looked back to where they were making their way back to the castle once more.

TBC

Chapter 14: Clues, Second Task and a Secret Revealed.

Harry sighed as he made his way into the prefect bathroom with a towel draped over his shoulder along with a pair of cut off jeans. His egg was in one hand while he held a shirt in the other. He came to a stop just next to the large round bath that more resembled a shallow pool rather than a bath.

Harry looked at all the taps that surrounded the bath and noticed that they contained different bubbles and scents. He reached over and found the larger taps that switched on the cold and hot water and watched as the bath slowly filled itself up. Harry looked around self-consciously before he reached over and turned another tap, filling the bath with blue bubbles that didn't give off any scent at all.

Once the bath was filled, Harry switched off the taps and stood up and stripped himself naked, leaving his clothes on the side next to the towel and shirt. He slid himself into the water, allowing the heat to soak into his body.

Harry closed his eyes as he leaned his head back on the edge of the bath and let his mind drift, memories washing over him.

The memory of when his name came out of the Goblet of Fire. He couldn't help the small rage that ran through his body but quickly calmed back down. He wasn't as angry as he used to be about it.

Yes, he hated the fact that he had to put his life in danger yet again - for no good reason this time but for other people's entertainment. But he couldn't be bothered to work up the energy to be angry all the time – no, he had other things to worry about.

His mind went to Hermione and he frowned softly when he remembered the fear that appeared in her eyes when she told him about Viktor Krum and the feeling of someone stalking her. She was scared and it made Harry angry that the man couldn't leave her alone.

Hermione didn't need anything else to worry about – she was already stressed out about Harry being in the championship; she didn't need an idiot harassing her. Harry sighed as his thoughts drifted back to

earlier in the day when Mia had received a letter from Sirius after she had explained the situation to him.

Sirius had advised them to tell Professor McGonagall so that she could take it to the appropriate person and make sure that it didn't happen again. They hadn't done it yet because they'd all been busy making sure that Hagrid showed up for his lessons, Hermione and Mia doing their elemental lessons and Harry trying to find time to get to the prefect bathroom so he could uncover the clue to the next task.

With this in mind, Harry opened his eyes and saw the egg still sitting next to the bath. He sighed and lifted his hands out of the water – time to get on with it.

Harry took the egg and eyed it closely once again before he looked at the water and wondered what was it he was supposed to do.

"You're supposed to dunk it in the water," a female voice spoke up, startling Harry. He spun around to see a familiar ghost hovering near the water taps.

"Myrtle?" Harry asked and got a shy giggle in return. "How long have you been standing there?" Harry demanded and Myrtle rolled her eyes.

"I covered my eyes when you got undressed and into the water," Myrtle told him. Harry just nodded, not once believing her as he turned back to the egg.

"So, I'm supposed to bury my head in the water with the egg?" Harry asked and Myrtle nodded in agreement. Harry just raised an eyebrow about that but shrugged it off. He took a deep breath before he dunked his head under and pried the egg open.

Instead of the usual raspy shrill voice that had appeared each time he had opened it, a gently soothing female voice sang from the egg.

Once the song was over, Harry's head came out of the water with a gasp. He continued to gulp in the air that his lungs needed before he was able to settle down and breathe normally. He rested his back

against the wall of the bath as he thought about what the message had said.

“So, basically they are going to take what I sorely miss,” Harry muttered to himself before frowning softly as he raised his eyes and looked the window that had a glass stained mermaid on it and sighed. “Great, mermaids now.”

“Wow, you caught on quicker than that other boy did,” Myrtle told him and Harry arched an eyebrow at the young ghost, who would have blushed if she still had the ability to do so.

“Make a habit of spying on people when they come to the prefect bathroom?” Harry asked Myrtle dryly and she rolled her eyes.

“No – but I do haunt the bathroom every now and then,” Myrtle explained and Harry nodded in understanding as he closed the egg, brought it out of the water and sat it down on the edge. He flopped back against the edge of the bath and sighed again, thoughts swirling around the dark message of the next task.

Myrtle frowned as she watched emotions flitter over Harry’s face before she sighed and moved closer to Harry. “You’re worried.” Harry looked up at her, startled.

“Is it that obvious?” Harry and Myrtle nodded.

“I see people, despite what everyone thinks. I know that that Viktor guy has been harassing Hermione. That the new boy is interested in Mia and she’s interested in him yet she holds herself back. I see your frustration over being forced into the Triwizarding Tournament,” Myrtle explained and Harry gave a sad smile.

“Can you see the future?” Harry asked, causing Myrtle to return the sad smile as she shook her head.

“I wish I could but I can say that it will get better over time – it has to,” Myrtle told him and Harry nodded, glad that she was trying to help him cheer up. “I’ll see you later Harry.” With that, Myrtle disappeared through the drain, leaving Harry leaning against the back of the bath, staring at the glass stained window of a mermaid.

Harry found himself walking through the hallway the next morning. He had made his way back to the common room after relaxing for a while in the bath. He had almost bumped into Moody on the way back and was curious to why Moody and Filch seemed to be having an argument.

Harry was lost in his thoughts when a male voice called out, attracting his attention toward the newcomer.

“Harry!” a male voice called out and Harry turned to see Sirius walking toward him. Harry let out a huge grin.

“Uncle Sirius!” Harry greeted as he hurried over to his uncle and gave an excited hug to the elder man. “What are you doing here?” Harry asked as he pulled away.

“I’m not going to be able to be here for the second task,” Sirius explained and he saw Harry’s face fall slightly at this. “Sorry, but Draco has sent me some leads and I need to check them out. I decided to come here and spend the day with you all instead.”

Harry nodded in understanding – he knew that it wouldn’t be easy for Sirius to be there at every task.

“Harry!” a female voice called out and Harry turned to see Hermione hurrying toward him with a look of panic on her face. She came to a stop and gave Sirius a quick hug before she looked at Harry.

“Hermione?” Harry asked, concerned.

“A unicorn has been killed for its blood!” Hermione whispered to them so that only they could hear her and the pin dropped for Harry.

“Voldemort,” Harry whispered and Hermione nodded. It was the only explanation for what had happened to the unicorn and Sirius raked a hand through his hair.

“That’s what I was worried about,” Sirius told them and they looked at him. “There have been quite a few unicorns being killed. Lupin found out about it and informed me about them. It’s correlating with what Draco has told me – Voldemort has found a way to come back.”

“God,” Hermione groaned as she pressed her hand to her forehead as all her fears just seemed to crash on top of each other. Harry just reached out and drew her into a hug.

“I’m going to be okay – we’re all going to be okay,” Harry whispered. Hermione just nodded as she clung to him while Sirius watched them with a sad expression on his face.

Harry was on his way down to the lake with Mia and Neville by his side. Neville handed Harry some green looking weed that reminded Harry of the apple lace sweets you could buy in the muggle world.

Harry and Hermione had hit the library after the news of the unicorn's death. Mia had met up with them there and left with her father because Sirius had wanted to talk to her about what was going on with her and the boys. Neville had shown up later and had questioned Harry about the second task. He had found a way for Harry to be able to breathe underwater – Gillyweed.

“Don’t eat any of it until you are a few seconds away from being in the water – it works instantly and you don’t want to be on land when it starts,” Neville warned Harry, who nodded.

“Okay,” Harry told him before he looked around the area. He spotted Ron standing with Dean, Seamus and the twins before he frowned slightly when he couldn’t find the person he was looking for. “Have any of you seen Hermione?” Harry asked as he continued to look around but Mia shook her head.

“Professor McGonagall wanted to see her this morning,” Mia explained and Harry nodded in understanding as they moved closer to the dock where the champions would be starting the next task.

Mia shivered slightly when she saw the lake before shaking her head. Harry just reached out and wrapped an arm around her.

“Don’t worry – you won’t need to go in the water,” Harry assured her and got a playful glare in return.

“Only if you don’t drown yourself – it does get a bit tiring having to save your butt all the time,” Mia teased him getting a bump in the hips from Harry.

“Watch it little sister – I’m older than you so I can always pull rank,” Harry warned her playfully with a teasing smirk on his face.

“But you still love me, right?” Mia pouted, causing Harry to roll his eyes.

“I hate you,” Harry muttered as he enveloped Mia in his arms. “You have got to be the most annoying little sister on earth.”

“Back atcha big brother,” Mia retorted as she wrapped her arms around Harry’s waist. “Don’t go killing yourself though – annoying big brother or not, you’re still my brother and I don’t want you dead.”

“Don’t worry – I’ll be fine,” Harry told her as he pulled away and looked into her blue eyes. “Keep an eye out for Hermione. I don’t like the fact that none of us really know where she is.” Mia nodded in understanding as they moved closer to the edge and she took Harry’s cloak, leaving him clad in his swimming outfit.

“Harry – remember, you can’t come out of the water until the gillyweed has worn off,” Neville whispered to Harry and Harry nodded as he clapped Neville’s shoulder.

“Thanks for helping me out,” Harry told him but Neville shook it off.

“No thanks needed – you’re a good friend and I don’t want to lose you,” Neville told him and Harry grinned back as they both remembered the late night talks they shared when everyone else had gone to sleep.

“Attention!” a loud male voice called out and everyone quieted down as they all turned to see their headmaster standing there with his wand next to his neck, amplifying his voice. “Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the second task!” Everyone cheered. “Our champions have been allotted a time limit to where they must go into the water, retrieve their ‘sorely missed’ and make it back to the surface before time runs out. Champions, take your marks.”

Harry, Fleur, Cedric and Viktor made their way over to the edge of the dock and waited. Harry lifted his gillyweed and shoved it into his mouth just as Dumbledore gave the signal to go.

The horn let out a huge noise and all the champions jumped into the water. When Harry landed in the water, he stopped for a moment to get his bearings and for the transformation to take full effect so he would be able to breathe properly underwater.

Harry looked at his hands and feet and saw that they had become webbed and felt his neck to feel gills. He gave a short smirk before he swam off like a shot, following his instincts.

Up above the water, Ron was currently holding Mia to him as she wrapped her arms around his waist, comforting her.

“He’ll be fine – everyone will be fine,” Ron assured her and Mia nodded, not once taking her eyes off the water as she waited for Harry to surface.

Harry moved deeper into the lake, keeping an eye out for any danger when he saw faint outlines near the bottom of the lake next to a sunken ship. Pushing on faster he quickly neared the shapes and could make out four hostages apparently sleeping in the water.

Harry could see a blonde girl – he guessed it was Fleur’s little sister. He noticed that Cho Chang was there as well and frowned slightly when he saw Ginny, wondering why she was there. When his eyes landed on the last figure, however, his heart stopped.

Hermione was, like the others, in a deep sleep. Harry moved over to her and touched her cheek. He looked around for something to free her before he grabbed his wand and was about to cut the rope holding her in place when a mermaid got in his way, looking furious.

“She’s mine!” Harry shouted at the mermaid but the mermaid shook her head, pointing to Ginny. Understanding dawned on Harry and rage coursed through his body, causing the water surrounding him to start heating up as fire raged behind his eyes.

The mermaids and mermen hurried away and Harry sent a severing charm at Hermione's rope. He drew her in and held her close to his body before turning around to see Cedric making his way over to them.

Cedric used the same spell to free Cho before he took her up. Soon after that Harry saw a shark heading towards them. When it got close, however, it stopped and Harry saw that it was really half human, half shark and guessed it was Viktor.

Harry glared at the shark as he looked between Harry and Ginny before he moved over to Ginny, cut her rope and swam up with her.

Harry looked around the lake for Fleur and noticed that time was ticking by before he made up his mind and swam over to the small girl and cut her free before he made his way back to the surface with both females.

Soon he felt slimy hands sliding around his ankles and legs. Startled, Harry looked down only to see several squid clinging to his legs, holding him down. He had broken a rule and taken two hostages when he was only supposed to take one – apparently the squid weren't going to let him get away with that.

Harry fought the squid the best that he could with two hostages in his arms, but had to let out a gurgled cry when he felt his gills closing up and pain started to shoot through his body – the gillyweed was beginning to wear off and the squids' tentacles were beginning to sear his skin.

Desperate, Harry threw the two females up towards the surface and grabbed his wand as he pointed it downward and cast out a spell that had the squid swimming away.

Harry was about to raise his wand when his lungs began to fill with water and his strength started to deteriorate. Harry looked toward the surface as he felt himself floating down. The edges of his vision started to turn black.

Hermione gave a startled gasp when she woke up, her eyes blinking in the sunlight as she looked around, dazed, wondering what had happened to her when she heard people calling her name.

Hermione turned, only to realise that she was soaking wet and in the lake. Frowning, she saw a young blonde girl looking around with tears in her eyes and that Mia and Ron were standing at the dock, shouting her name.

Hermione reached over to the girl and gently tugged her along in the water until she reached the edge of the docks.

"Where's Harry?" Mia asked as she and Ron helped to pull Hermione out of the water. Neville and Seamus helped to pull the younger girl out.

"I don't know, I only woke up when I came out of the water," Hermione explained as Mia wrapped a towel around her and Mia swore.

"Fucking tasks," she muttered as she stood up and dove into the water.

"She's scary," Neville stated and Ron snorted out a laugh as he grabbed another towel and wrapped it around Hermione, who was beginning to shiver.

Mia made her way into the water and started tearing at her clothes. Once she was naked, her legs started to meld together. As she shifted in the water, the sunlight hit it the water at the right angle, revealing a white tail. She swam her way down to where she could see the small squids swimming around.

Harry looked up toward the light and saw a figure making their way toward him. He opened his mouth and bubbles came out just as a hand grabbed his shirt and yanked on it, pulling him up to the surface.

Everyone watched as Mia and Harry surfaced. Harry coughed and spluttered as he coughed up water while Mia held onto him.

"You okay?" Mia asked and Harry sighed.

"When I get away from this damn lake, I will be," he muttered as Mia swam over to the dock, pulling Harry with her.

"Here you go," Mia told them, and Ron and Neville reached down and pulled Harry up onto the dock. Hermione, Seamus, Dean and Ron all grabbed a towel and wrapped it around Harry as he shivered.

"You took so long down there," Hermione whispered as she held him close, just holding on.

"Are you ever going to come out of there, Miss Black?" McGonagall asked and everyone looked down at Mia, who was still in the water and got a sheepish grin in reply.

"Erm, I can't," Mia admitted and Harry's eyes widened in understanding.

"Mia, you didn't!" he exclaimed and got a glare in return.

"You were drowning!" she shot back. "I didn't have a choice!"

"What are you talking about?" Dumbledore asked, concern written over his face and Harry sighed as he turned to face them.

"Mia's a half mermaid," Harry admitted and everyone turned and Mia was on her back, flapping her white tail at them before she dived underwater again and popped up with a shrug. "She's technically naked and as none of us have any spare clothes with us, she can't walk on land at the moment," Harry explained and noticed that a water beetle fell from Hermione's hair and into his lap after this announcement. He frowned before he flicked at it, sending it into the lake.

"But..." McGonagall started.

"My mom's side," Mia explained. "I never said just what kind of half blood she was," she reminded.

"Dear Merlin," McGonagall told them with a shake of her head before she waved her wand and transfigured a long robe. "Here, put this on.

It's better than leaving you here in the lake until someone comes by with clothes," she explained.

Mia arched an eyebrow as she saw all the boys, apart from Harry, Ron and Draco, looking a little eager.

"Erm, Professor, I don't really want to give the boys a peep show," Mia explained and McGonagall waved her wand once more and the boys found themselves facing the other way, no matter how hard they tried to face the lake.

Harry just buried his face into Hermione's neck as he bit back his laughter and Draco rolled his eyes in amusement.

McGonagall leaned down on the stand as she helped Mia wrap the cloak around her body before she helped pull Mia out of the lake and onto the dock.

Everybody watched as Mia's white tail slowly faded away and her legs came back into view. She wriggled her toes before she looked at Harry and Hermione.

"Come on Ariel, lets get back up to the castle," Harry remarked, causing the muggleborns to catch on and start laughing while the purebloods just looked confused. Mia just rolled her eyes as she stood up only to find herself swooped up in a pair of strong arms.

Confused, she traced the arms up to see that they belonged to Hunter.

"Put me down," Mia hissed. Hunter looked at her.

"Sorry, no can do. You can't expect to walk back up to the castle barefoot, can you?" Hunter asked as he fought to keep the squirming Mia in his arms.

"Yes I can. I'm not so helpless that I need someone to carry me," Mia informed him.

"But I thought women liked to be swept off their feet," Hunter replied slyly only to get an irritated glare in return.

“Put. Me. Down. Or I will kick your butt!” Mia snapped.

“Here, I’ll carry her,” Cedric spoke up as he moved closer to them and tried to take Mia into his arms. But Hunter just took a step back and didn’t hand her over.

“No, it’s okay – I can handle her,” Hunter stated. Mia just arched an eyebrow at him, annoyed.

“She doesn’t want you to carry her. I’ll carry her - she knows me,” Cedric argued back as both boys glared at each other. Mia, meanwhile, was getting even more annoyed.

She managed to wriggle her way out of Hunter’s arms and found herself settled firmly on the ground.

“Oh for goodness sakes!” Mia exclaimed as she shoved both boys away from her. “I’m a big girl... I have been walking perfectly well on my own for years! A few stones are not going to kill me!” With that, she stormed off, holding her robes tight around her in irritation.

“And life is getting better each day at school,” Draco muttered, causing those that overheard him to look at him in shock. “Hey – do any of you remember what she was like last year?” Everyone winced in understanding.

“Kids, lets get you up to Madame Pomfrey to get you checked up,” McGonagall told the champions and their hostages, gaining nods of agreement from them before they all hurried over to the tent, eager to get warm.

The champions and the hostages were being looked over by Madam Pomfrey to make sure that none of them had suffered down in the water. She had checked over Mia first and claimed that Mia was fine – she just needed to get into some warm clothes and allowed the younger woman to leave.

Once Madam Pomfrey had checked out everyone else to her satisfaction – they were all fine - she started on Harry. She wasn’t happy with the situation when she found that he had burns from squid

and made that fact very clear to the headmaster, the ministry and to Crouch.

Once Madam Pomfrey had healed up Harry's wounds and given him his strict instructions on the cream that he would have to take in order to keep the wounds healing, she had left them to go back to her hospital wing and make sure no other students had turned up during her absence.

Harry and Hermione sat close together on a chair as they watched a war break out between McGonagall and Fudge. Apparently Mia's being a mermaid was a "secret", and it had Fudge hopping like mad that there was a half mermaid walking on land and no one had thought to inform the ministry about it.

"Why would she?" McGonagall demanded as she turned on her heels and glared at the minister. "She knows exactly what you would do to her – class her as a dangerous creature and put her in a locked room where she could be experimented on. Especially considering the fact that mermaids and mermen usually are not exactly friendly people."

"She still should have warned us – she needs to be registered as a mermaid," Fudge informed the Gryffindor house head but this only infuriated her even more.

"Why? So you people can go to her house any time you want and arrest her for being a dangerous creature? Or to kill her when you feel that she has become too unstable? Or to make sure she can't get a job in this world because she isn't 'normal'?" McGonagall asked heatedly. "No, you will leave my student alone. If I catch any of you near her or Mia comes to me saying that people are bothering her about her situation – you will regret it!"

"Professor McGonagall..." Crouch started but Dumbledore stood up, cutting their conversation short.

"Miss Black only revealed herself as a half mermaid because Mr Potter was in danger. I am sure that Miss Black rarely uses her mermaid form," Dumbledore looked over to Harry and got a nod of confirmation.

“Mia won’t use it often at all – she doesn’t like it because of the urges she get when she changes into her mermaid form – Uncle Sirius said that Aunt Callie refused to change into her mermaid form too,” Harry explained and Dumbledore nodded.

“And I trust that you will all leave Miss Black alone – I’m sure we all realise that she has enough problems on her plate. I would rather have my school in one piece at the end of the year,” Dumbledore informed them, shutting the ministry representatives up and getting a pleased nod from Professor McGonagall.

“Actually – while we are on that topic,” Harry spoke up and everyone looked toward him, shocked to see that he was angry. “Who the fuck thought that I would actually miss Ginny and made Hermione Viktor’s hostage?” Dumbledore frowned at this – he had thought that it had been arranged for Viktor’s brother to be his hostage.

“Harry?” Hermione asked in confusion and Harry turned to her.

“When I went to cut the ropes, the mermaid there stopped me and pointed at Ginny. Apparently I was to save her while Viktor was to save you,” Harry informed her and Hermione felt her jaw drop at the implication. She turned around to face the others gathered in the tent.

“Well?” Hermione demanded.

“We wanted to make sure that you weren’t overestimating your relationship,” Crouch informed the younger man. “Mrs. Weasley seemed insistent that we should swap hostages at the last minute.” Dumbledore’s face paled slightly at this before he sat down on his chair.

He knew that he and Harry had a long way before they could fully form a bond of trust. He admitted that he wanted Harry under his control, but as he watched how everyone made Harry who he was, he knew that Harry was in good hands already. When Voldemort came back, he would be no match for Harry.

“Here’s the part that you all seem to be missing,” Harry informed them. “Hermione and I are dating. You can try all you want, but you will not break us up. If I catch any of you pulling another stunt like this,

you can guarantee that I will leave Hogwarts and go to another school where no one will try and control me.”

“Harry...” Molly started but was cut off with a cold glare.

“And if you try that stupid argument about how Ginny and I are perfect for each other, you will find your mouth removed. Permanently. I’m sick and tired of listening to you go on about your perfect daughter when she has done nothing but make me sick!”

Ginny let out an insulted gasp before she turned her head away from Harry as pain shot through her psyche. She couldn’t understand why Harry was denying their love for each other. She looked toward Harry and saw that he was hugging Hermione close to him and watched as he smiled slightly at something she said and kissed her softly on the lips. Ginny looked away, disgusted.

At dinnertime in the Great Hall gossip was flying all over the place. The revelations and suppositions created by the second task were causing a social frenzy.

Hunter was sitting at his table, staring at Mia, deep in thought about his feelings for the younger female.

Hunter didn’t understand what it was about that girl that just drew him to her. Ever since he had arrived at Hogwarts, he found himself looking at her without even realising it. She was sassy and fiery, which often made him wonder just how fiery she could get when she wanted to be.

Hunter knew that she had a barrier up around her and the only people she seemed to let close to her was her brother, her best friend and that Ron Weasley kid. He knew that he had no competition from Ron because the two of them weren’t interested in each other.

Hunter knew that Mia was one-of-a-kind. She said what was on her mind and didn’t give a damn about what people thought of her - something that impressed Hunter because girls these days just seemed to be more concerned about their looks. But man, that girl could go to town when she wanted to.

He watched as Cedric walked up to Mia and handed her something. Mia smiled up at him before saying something and Cedric grinned back before he left, leaving Mia alone. Hermione leaned into Mia, looking over her shoulder to see what Cedric had given her only for Mia to hide it when the boys tried to look in too.

Hunter looked over at Cedric and saw that he was talking with Cho. He couldn't help but feel confused about the two of them – they flirted with each other, yet Cedric was together with Cho.

“What's up with you?” a male voice asked and Hunter turned to see one of his classmates sitting next to him.

“Nothing,” Hunter denied and Draco snorted.

“Please, you've been drooling over at Gryffindor table since you've arrived - and that glare could have turned someone to stone,” Draco informed him before he looked in the same direction Hunter was looking only to drop his fork and he stared at Hunter in a shock. “Please don't say you were drooling over the Black girl.”

“So what if I was,” Hunter replied defensively and Draco shook his head.

“Don't go near her,” Draco told him firmly, his voice low so that no one else could hear the conversation.

“What?” Hunter asked, confused.

“Don't go near her – don't play with her heart. If you're truly interested in her, then that's fine. But if you are just looking for a piece of ass – look somewhere else,” Draco warned him. “Trust me when I say you don't want to mess her about. There are consequences you don't even understand.” With that, he stood up and moved away from Hunter, leaving him alone with his thoughts once again.

Harry and Hermione finished dinner and went on up to Gryffindor's common room.

"I don't think Mia is very happy," Hermione told Harry. They were sitting on the couch, facing the fire. Harry was leaning against the ledge of the couch while Hermione was sitting between his legs.

"Yeah, that Hunter isn't making things any easier for her," Harry mumbled out. Hermione had to stifle a smile. Harry was less than pleased that someone had taken an interest in his sister. Lupin had sent a letter after Harry wrote to Sirius telling him that someone had expressed an interest in Mia, and it said that Sirius had spent the whole day complaining that his little girl was too young to be gaining the interest of men.

"He likes her," Hermione told him only to get a disgruntled look back. She sighed before she shifted so she could look into Harry's eyes. Hermione cupped her boyfriend's face. "I know you only want to protect Mia, but she is gorgeous. Boys are going to be interested in her whether you like or not."

"I know she's gorgeous, but I don't want her to get hurt," Harry told her and Hermione nodded.

"I know, but its life. It's evitable that we'll all get hurt. We all have to face pain sooner or later," Hermione told him wisely, and Harry smiled.

"How does she feel about him?" Harry asked and Hermione rolled her eyes.

"She complains about him... says that he is a caveman and how she was not impressed with his stunt earlier," Hermione told him.

"Why am I not surprised?" Harry asked. "What do you think?" Hermione sighed.

"I think she likes him but she's scared. You know how much she hates the thought of losing us one day. Imagine the thought of losing someone you are in a relationship with! She's trying to protect her heart by keeping herself away from Hunter and not analysing her feelings," Hermione explained before her tone became bitter. "Plus, it doesn't help that that bitch kept telling Mia that no guy would ever be interested in her."

“Hey,” Harry soothed as he stroked back her hair. Harry knew all too well just how much Hermione hated Molly, and not just for her actions against Mia.

“Sorry,” Hermione apologised but Harry shook his head.

“No, I understand,” Harry promised her. “Molly *is* a bitch, but you don’t need to get worked up about her. Karma gets everyone in the end, and Molly will get her turn.” Hermione nodded.

“I just can’t believe that they used me as a hostage for Viktor,” she whispered as the memories of Viktor watching her and grabbing her arms rose up in her mind. Harry just tightened his arms around her waist.

“I’m just glad that I got there first,” Harry whispered as he buried his face into her hair, holding her close. He couldn’t believe that they had used Hermione to be Viktor’s hostage – after everything she had been through at the hands of him. He knew that they didn’t know about that, but they should have stuck with the original plan rather than letting a stupid woman get her say in everything and changing it around. Harry decided to change the conversation.

“What did Mia get from Cedric?” Harry asked casually only for Hermione to grin up at him and he realised that his attempt at being casual had failed.

“Relax Harry. It wasn’t like a note asking her to meet up with him so they could have sex,” Hermione informed him only for Harry to freeze slightly.

“I hope not,” Harry muttered and Hermione rolled her eyes.

“Jesus Harry, you’re worse than Sirius! If you are like this with your sister, what the hell are you going to be like with our daughter?” Hermione demanded, not realising what she had just said while Harry sighed.

“Hermione, we’ve only just got together and we already have a daughter?” Harry asked, amused. Hermione froze on the spot when she realised what she had said before nudging him in the stomach.

“You know what I mean,” Hermione shot at him and Harry grinned.

“Are we having our first fight as a couple?” Harry asked. Hermione tilted her head slightly before she nodded.

“Yes,” she told him before an idea came to her mind and she turned to face Harry with a bright smile on her face. “Does this mean we have to make up?”

“I think so,” Harry told her. Hermione just smiled as she grabbed his shirt and pulled him down for a kiss. Harry let out a shocked moan before he closed his eyes as Hermione turned onto her front and straddled his lap as he pulled her closer to him.

One of Harry’s hands went straight for Hermione’s hair. He loved playing with her hair as they kissed – it was so soft and silky despite its appearance. He pulled away from Hermione’s lips and kissed her neck, loving Hermione’s gasps and mewls of pleasure as she arched her neck, exposing more of her throat to him.

Harry’s other hand slid up under her shirt, resting his hand on her skin as he nibbled the sweet spot that was at the base of Hermione’s throat. Hermione released a small groan before she slid her hands into Harry’s hair and pulled his lips away from her neck. She kissed him again as one of her hands slid down his chest before she fingered his buttons – wondering if she should undo them when she felt a hot heat on her thigh.

Harry and Hermione stilled slightly when they felt Harry’s hand on Hermione’s thigh, just below her skirt, and knew that they were moving too fast.

“We have to slow down,” Harry whispered against her lips and Hermione nodded in agreement as she gave him one last kiss. She pulled away and rested her head on his chest, both of them trying to catch their breath when Harry frowned softly.

“Where is Mia anyway?” Harry asked. Hermione just shrugged, obviously having no idea where Mia was either.

Draco walked round the corner of a hallway and stopped in shock. He ducked back round the corner before looking around the wall once more and disbelievingly saw the same scene.

“This is not happening. I didn’t see that. I’m just going to continue walking on and pretend that this was all a bad dream,” Draco muttered to himself as he walked back down the way he had just come.

Meanwhile, Mia was currently wrapped up in the arms of Cedric as he kissed her softly and gently while cupping the back of her head, his fingers tangling up in her curly black hair.

Soon, air was a necessity and they broke apart, both breathing heavily. Cedric moved in once more, taking Mia’s lips back into his. Mia let out a small moan as he flicked his tongue over her lips, asking for entrance, and Mia parted her lips, allowing him to enter.

Cedric stroked his tongue over hers, encouraging her to play with his as she slipped her hand into his dark locks, holding him close.

Mia broke away from him when she ran out of air again and Cedric looked down at her.

“Are you sure you haven’t kissed anyone before?” Cedric asked with a suspicious glare and Mia giggled slightly.

“I’ve kissed on the lips, but never full,” Mia replied before shrugging. “I’ve read the books.”

“Well, you’re certainly a natural,” Cedric told her and Mia grinned as Cedric moved back down and took her lips back into his, pressing her body against his own, enjoying their kiss together.

TBC

Chapter 15: Papers, Problems and Warning.

Mia was sitting at the table in the Great Hall the next morning and sighed to herself as she picked up the papers only to see her face on the front page and the headline 'Black Girl hides Secret!'

Mia's small frown marred her forehead as she wondered how Skeeter had found out about her being a half mermaid. A small thud brought her out of her thoughts and she turned to see Hunter sitting next to her, straddling the bench.

"Yes?" Mia asked curiously about what Hunter wanted.

"I need your help," Hunter told her, causing Mia to arch an eyebrow. "How do you stop a girl from following you around when you don't want her to?"

Mia frowned softly when she felt a pang of jealousy run through her body before she shook it off and tuned back into the conversation.

"How do you mean?" Mia asked, curious about who Hunter was talking about.

"There's this female who keeps following me around and she's kinda getting on my nerves," Hunter admitted.

"Who?" Mia asked her curiosity unsatisfied.

"That blonde from the other school," Hunter told her before frowning. "She's one of the champions." Understanding dawned on Mia's face.

"Ah – Fleur – the half veela," Mia stated. "Harry overheard Fleur telling a friend that she was a half veela – which explains why most of the men are falling over her. Curious about why you're not falling over her though."

Hunter rolled his eyes at the question before shrugging.

"I don't just go for looks... a girl has got to have an attractive personality too," Hunter explained and Mia nodded in understanding.

“Maybe you could tell her that you are not interested in her like that?” Mia suggested only for Hunter to wince.

“I tried that, but she doesn’t seem to get the message,” Hunter explained. “Do you think you know anyone that she could be attracted to?” Mia looked at him questioningly.

“Are you trying to get her off your back or set her up with someone else?” Mia asked and Hunter grinned.

“I’m planning on setting her up with someone else. You see, if I can find someone who really likes her then maybe she could like him back and in the process leave me alone,” Hunter explained.

“I don’t get why you don’t like her – she’s nice,” Mia protested and Hunter looked at her curiously causing Mia to blush slightly. “We’ve talked – she’s a really nice girl, just a little misjudged. You have no idea how many men hit on her just because she’s a blonde and a veela.” Hunter shrugged.

“Look, I’m sure she’s a really nice person but she’s not my type and I don’t want to get involved with her. I just want to divert her attention onto someone who could really care for her and really wants to date her because they want to know her,” Hunter explained and Mia sighed.

“And you’ve come to me...because?” Mia asked. “I’m not exactly dating material considering the fact that I tend to flip guys onto their back before trying to crush their ribs.” Hunter couldn’t stop the laughter from coming out. “Glad I could amuse you.”

“Sorry,” Hunter choked out as he tried to breath through his laughter. He tried to calm himself down and settle back to normal. “Sorry,” he apologised once more. “You know some of the boys here. Are you telling me that none of them are really interested in her?”

“Not unless you’re talking physically,” Mia admitted with a small disgusted wince. Some of the men here haven’t really grown up past the stage that dating isn’t all about sex.”

“Ah,” Hunter understood. He saw Mia’s eyes light up with an idea and curiosity sparked inside of him. “You do have an idea. Who?”

Mia was taken aback when she realised that Hunter seemed to understand her and it made her a little nervous before she shook herself.

“I was thinking of this older man I know – Bill Weasley. He’s single, and Ron’s commented on how he likes blondes. I wonder if I could get Ron to convince Bill to come down for the last task and maybe you could set them up somehow?” Mia suggested.

“Me?” Hunter asked wide eyes and Mia nodded before she narrowed her eyes at him.

“It’s your idea buddy – I’m not getting involved!” Mia informed him. Hunter mock-pouted, but Mia wasn’t convinced by it. “Nope – forget it. I firmly believe that, yes, people sometimes need a helping hand. They should find each other on their own. All you need to do is get them to meet and let nature take its course.”

“Alone?” Hunter asked. Mia nodded.

“Yep – alone,” Mia told him before shrugging. “I can’t hold your hand for this. You want Fleur off your back so you need to do it yourself. It’s the only way you’ll learn anything.”

“Oh thanks. Throw me to the wolves,” Hunter remarked, causing Mia to grin.

“Don’t worry, you’ll be fine,” she patted his shoulder before looking at her watch and sighing. “I gotta go to the library – I have homework for potions.”

“Did I hear you mention my class?” A silky voice spoke up and Mia turned to see Snape standing there.

“Yep,” Mia informed him before frowning. “Potions homework. Remember you said we were to do research on the wolf bane potion and its side effects and if there was anything to prevent those side

effects so that the people who were bitten would have an easier time changing.”

Snape just arched an eyebrow at the young female, suddenly on alert that she was speaking civilly to him. Hunter just gaped at Mia, wondering where the smart-assed Mia had gone to.

Mia stood up, shouldering her bag that contained her homework, and shot Snape a sweet and innocent smile. “Later!” Mia walked out of the Great Hall with Snape and Hunter watching after her.

Hunter gave Snape an unsure grin before he got up and bolted after Mia, leaving Snape frowning behind him.

She had to have done something to office. He’d bet his wand on it. Snape set off to investigate, intent on finding out what she had done.

Hunter made his way into the library and found Mia rounding a bookcase. He made his way over there but startled her when she turned around and saw him standing there and received a hard glare for his trouble.

“What?” Mia hissed, mindful of Madam Pince. As much as she may have liked the older woman, she was terrified of her in the library.

“Why are we whispering?” Hunter whispered back and Mia shot him an ‘are you insane?’ look.

“Have you even met Madam Pince?” Mia demanded in a whisper as she looked around for the older woman before she looked at Hunter once more. “She’s flipping terrifying when she wants to be.”

Hunter arched an eyebrow in amusement to see the usually fearless Mia Black scared of a librarian.

“She’s not that scary,” Hunter whispered. Mia just nodded as she crossed her arms.

“Then why are you whispering?” Mia shot back quietly, stumping Hunter with her question before she walked off in search for her book.

While she was browsing the bookcases and scanning the books, she bumped into another figure, startling both of them.

Mia let out a small shriek before she clamped her hand over her mouth to prevent her scream from being heard before she glared at the intruder.

“Malfoy!” Mia hissed. “What the heck do you think you are doing sneaking around?”

“I wasn’t sneaking around!” Malfoy shot back. “Maybe you should start looking where you’re going Black!”

“Oh...” Mia lifted her hands as she reached to strangle him when a female voice cracked through the air.

“Miss Black! Mr. Malfoy! Mr. Wolfe! I’d thank you to keep your voices DOWN!” Madam Pince snapped at them in a hissed whisper.

“Sorry Madam Pince,” all three apologised back to her softly. She just gave a severe nod before walking away. Once she was out of sight, all three of them relaxed visibly and let out a small soft sigh of relief.

“I heard that!” came the sharp voice again, startling them such that they straightened up and looked toward the direction of the voice only to see that she wasn’t in sight.

“How does she do that?” All three of them whispered to each other before Malfoy shook his head and walked out of the library, leaving Hunter and Mia alone.

“I guess you were right when you said she was terrifying,” Hunter stated quietly and he got a nod of agreement from Mia.

Ron was making his way to the Great Hall when he heard someone call out his name. Curious, Ron turned around only to arch an eyebrow when he saw Percy making his way through a crowd of students.

“Percy? What are you doing here?” Ron asked curious as Percy moved closer to his younger brother.

“Is there somewhere we can talk privately – I don’t want anyone to overhear us,” Percy told him and Ron nodded as he led the way to an empty classroom where he knew that no one would be able to overhear them.

Once they were inside, Percy cast a locking charm on the door and a silencing charm over the room.

“What did you want to talk to me about?” Ron asked, curious about all the secrecy.

“What I’m about to tell you must not get any further than Harry, Hermione or Mia,” Percy told him and Ron agreed. “Crouch has gone missing. No one knows where he is and he’s not answering any of his owls.”

“Why are you telling me this?” Ron asked curiously.

“Because there was a piece of paper on his desk with Harry’s name written on it. It’s my belief that Crouch may approach Harry. Listen Ron – something has happened, something that spooked Crouch so badly that he has disappeared. I have a feeling it’s something to do with Harry,” Percy explained.

Ron frowned, still not understanding why Harry was stuck in the middle of it.

“What do you mean that it has something to do with Harry?” Ron asked.

“I met up with Crouch a few days ago. He was mumbling about something like having to tell Dumbledore something and that it involved Harry. Now if I’m getting it right – then something bad is going to happen to Harry unless we can find Crouch and get him give us the answers,” Percy explained.

Ron sat down heavily on the table as he process everything that had been told him.

“What kind of bad thing?” Ron asked, not really wanting the answer but at the same time needing it. He watched as Percy paled slightly before he swallowed hard and met Ron’s gaze head on.

“Harry’s death,” Percy admitted and Ron felt the air leave his chest.

Mia and Hunter were walking around the castle ground until they came to small bench when Hunter’s curiosity got to be too much for him.

“So, how come you never told anyone you are a mermaid?” Hunter asked.

“Half mermaid,” Mia ground out through her teeth before rubbing a hand over her forehead. “God – I’m sorry, I’m just bitchy this year.”

“That’s what I don’t get, why are you bitchy?” Hunter asked and Mia sighed as she sat down on her chair and looked at Hunter before shaking her head.

“Voldemort is going to come back,” Mia admitted. Hunter just stared at her after this revelation. “Harry is going to be at the front line when Voldemort comes back because he’ll want Harry dead for defeating him as a baby. I’m just working overtime so that I won’t lose my brother.”

“How do you know that Voldemort will come back?” Hunter whispered, causing Mia’s eyes to snap up to his, shocked that he actually had said Voldemort’s name.

“Because he's come back twice already,” Mia told him. “He possessed a teacher back in our first year, and he came back through a book in our second year. Now Harry has been forced into the Triwizarding Tournament – it can't a coincidence. Especially not after the quidditch match.”

“Where the death eaters attacked,” Hunter remembered and Mia nodded as she turned her face toward the lake.

“Harry is in danger and I don’t know how to handle it. I’m spinning out of control. I know I am but I have no idea how to get my life back in control,” Mia admitted.

“Maybe you need someone special to help you,” Hunter told her and Mia scoffed lightly.

“And lose them in the end because they can’t handle me or they die?” Mia asked as she turned her face toward Hunter’s. “Do you have any idea what it’s like to lose someone you’re so hopelessly in love with?” Mia asked. Hunter shook his head. “I see it every time I ask my dad about my mom – the pain that fills his eyes when he remembers how he lost her. I don’t want that to ever to happen to anyone else.”

“But...isn’t it better to love and lost rather than to never love at all?” Hunter asked. Mia turned tear filled eyes up to his before shrugging.

“My dad dreams of my mom. I can hear him at night and he cries too – the heartbreaking crying just tears me apart. It’s bad enough that I might lose Harry to Voldemort when he comes back but I don’t know if I would ever cope losing him and someone I completely love – how could you move on from that?” Mia whispered.

Hunter couldn’t help the empathy that filled his heart. He could see that Mia desperately wanted to find love but that she was scared at the thought that she could lose that person to Voldemort just because they were involved in with her.

“I think you just have to take that risk... know what it’s like to be in love rather than going through the motions without knowing what love is really like,” Hunter quietly told her.

Mia just locked eyes with him for a moment as she thought about his words before Hunter decided to change the conversation.

“So what's it like being a half mermaid?” Hunter asked and Mia sighed.

“My mom was a half mermaid – I don’t like using my form,” Mia told him, leaving Hunter curious.

“How do you mean?” Hunter asked and Mia sighed as she tried to express how the urges were like.

“When I change, I get the urge to hurt those people who have done something wrong,” Mia explained before she frowned. “Look – the merpeoples' lives aren't easy. They have been through a lot at the hands of humans – wives have been taken and forced to marry people on land, children have been kidnapped and forced to take things from the sea – all those urges get passed on to that one day that revenge.”

“And you don't like it?” Hunter asked.

“No – the one thing I'm scared of is being out of control of my own feelings. The feeling that I could really hurt someone scares me so I rarely use my mermaid form. I've only used it twice in my life,” Mia explained.

“Why does the Ministry want you to register as one then?” Hunter asked. Mia just looked at him, wondering where he had been all this time and Hunter blushed slightly. “I went to a muggle secondary school while my parents home schooled me about magic – they decided to send me to Hogwarts after it became clear that I needed some help in some areas of magic.”

“Home schooled – interesting,” Mia stated before she turned back to the original topic. “Because merpeople can be dangerous when they want to be and there have been some cases where half merpeople have lost their sanity due to the continual changing back and forth. It's the Ministry's way of keeping track of who is unnatural and who's normal.”

“Are you going to register?” Hunter asked.

“I have no choice. Fudge will use something against me just to get me to sign it. It'd be better just to get it over and done with so I don't have him coming to my door to arrest me or something,” Mia muttered, frustrated with her lack of control over her life.

“I'm sure it won't be that bad,” Hunter tried to console her but from the defeated expression on her face; he knew that it hadn't worked.

Both of them just sat there watching the sun that was beginning to make its descent. As it set, the sky changed colours and the lake lit up, taking everyone who was watching breath away.

Harry was in the Great Hall after spending most of the morning with Draco working on their elemental powers and most of the afternoon with Hermione doing their potions homework. Ron walked in and sat across from him at the table.

"Crouch is missing," Ron informed him bluntly.

"What do you mean?" Harry asked. Ron nudged his head over to the head table and Harry saw that Percy was shaking Dumbledore's hand and telling him something.

"Crouch has gone missing and no one knows where he is. So Percy is filling in for him as one of the judges," Ron explained.

"Where do you think Crouch has gone?" Harry asked as Ron filled his plate and got a shrug in return.

"I think something happened. Did you see him at the last task?" Ron asked. Harry frowned as he thought back and realised that Crouch had seemed a bit pale and off balanced. It was like that he was spooked or haunted by something.

"Yeah – but what could have happened to him?" Harry murmured. Ron just continued to stare at his food as he concentrated on cutting his food up – an action that had Harry confused and concerned. "Ron?"

Ron looked up at his best friend and felt his heart swell a bit before he looked away. All he could think was Percy's confession.

"So what – Harry is going to die?" Ron demanded. Percy sighed as he shrugged.

"Ron – it is not definite that Harry will die or that his death is even being plotted," Percy tried to assure his brother but got a disgusted scoff in return.

"Of course his death is being plotted – what the fuck do you think the person was planning when they put Harry's name into the Goblet of Fire? Fun and games?!" Ron shouted as he got off the table and started pacing the floor. He ran his hands through his red locks, making them stand up even more. "How am I supposed to tell Harry that his life is in danger again? No, scratch that – how am I supposed to tell Hermione and Mia that the man they love is the target again?"

"Ron – you don't need to tell them!" Percy exclaimed and Ron turned his furious blue eyes on Percy.

"Don't need to tell them?" Ron parroted. "What do I say if Harry does die? 'Sorry, I knew it was going to happen but no one wanted me to tell you'?" Percy looked away. "They'll fucking lose their temper and take out the entire wizarding world after going to the dark side! They are already on edge, especially Mia, because Harry has been forced into the Triwizarding. Keeping secrets now with Harry's life on the line is something that will bite me in the ass!" Ron roared.

"Ron..." Percy started but stopped when he saw Ron's shoulder slump down in devastation and defeat.

"Ron?" Harry's voice called him back to the present. Ron looked up, blinking as he came out of his thoughts, and found himself looking into concerned green eyes.

"Yeah?" Ron croaked out and Harry frowned.

"Are you okay? You just zoned out on me," Harry explained and Ron plastered a fake bright smile on his face.

"I'm fine!" Ron assured him, one that immediately had Harry suspicious. But he left it alone – Ron would come to him when he was ready.

"Okay – but don't you think you've put enough on your plate?" Harry asked with vague amusement. Ron looked confused before he looked at his plate only to find, to his astonishment, that he had filled the plate with even more food than usual.

Harry couldn't help the laughter that bubbled up from his chest after holding it in too long. He couldn't believe Ron's face.

Ron let a genuine smile escape his lips as he watched his best friend laugh and silently agreed to himself that maybe he shouldn't tell Harry just what Percy had told him.

"What's so funny?" a female voice asked and they turned to see Hermione sitting down in her normal seat next to Harry with an amused smile on her face.

"Hey," Harry greeted as his face lit up with a bright smile before he leaned in and kissed her on the lips. Ron looked away when he saw Hermione slip her hand into his hair as she kissed him back and found that most of the students were gaping at the couple.

Ron just shook his head before he scanned his eyes over to the other tables only to have them lock with a pair of dreamy blue eyes. Ron sent the owner a small smile.

Luna smiled back with a dreamy wave before she turned back to her housemate, who was asking her a question. Ron couldn't help the smile from getting larger as he watched Luna's radish earrings swinging from her ears with her head movement and how one of her hands played with her cork necklace. He shook his head and turned back to find that Harry was now resting his forehead on Hermione's as he spoke softly to her.

Yes, he was right in keeping the last part from Harry, Ron thought as he looked at Hermione. He would wait until tomorrow as he watched Hermione's eyes brighten with amusement and love and he didn't want to be the one who would pull that light out of her eyes – she had enough worries on her plate. It was better just to leave her alone to enjoy her time with Harry.

Ron had left the Great Hall after dessert with a majority of the students. A few stragglers were left just lingering with Harry and Hermione. Harry was straddling the bench facing Hermione, who was working on some homework.

Harry saw a paper that had been left on the table and decided to go ahead and catch up on the news. When he flipped it open his jaw tightened almost immediately.

“What the fuck?!” Harry demanded as the paper crinkled in his hands.

“Harry?” Hermione asked, concerned. Harry raised his head and looked at her before he turned the paper so that she could see the headline. Hermione's jaw dropped when she saw the headline about Mia being a mermaid and how her actions over the years had made perfect sense – her mermaid urges were beginning to get control of her and made her attack innocent people.

“I want to know how the hell she found out about this!” Harry raged. “She wasn’t anywhere near the fucking lake!”

“That we know of,” Hermione reminded him as she took the papers from his hands and skimmed through it.

“We need to find out how she is getting all this information – I’m sick and tired of seeing our friends plastered across the papers just because they happen to have a secret!” Harry informed her.

“I know,” Hermione told him as she placed a comforting hand on his thigh. “But you can’t go running into it already like you’re ready for battle. You need to work out a plan first on how to take her down so that she can’t get back up.”

“I wonder if Mia has seen this,” Harry murmured and Hermione gave him a sad smile.

“I think Mia has given up fighting with anyone at the moment,” Hermione told him and Harry looked at Hermione, confused. “She was nice to Snape this morning.” Harry’s jaw dropped open before he shook his head.

“No way – I bet you anything that she has done something to him and she is keeping the heat off herself,” Harry told her, but he lacked conviction. “Really?” Hermione nodded.

“Yeah – I think she has taken our advice and decided to slow down before she burns herself out,” Hermione told him. “That means no picking fights, getting into arguments or allowing herself to be wound up – or at least not as often.”

“Wow,” Harry uttered as he sat back, shocked that Mia was actually listening to them about taking a break. “Will miracles never cease?”

Hermione backhanded Harry lightly on the chest. “Be nice,” she scolded him. “Mia does take advice.”

“Yeah, when she actually listens to them,” Harry reminded her and Hermione rolled her eyes in return as she turned back to the paper. Harry was right – Mia could be very stubborn when she wanted to be, but Hermione was glad to see that her best friend was slowing her pace rather than bolting off when ever something annoyed her.

Harry saw a movement out of the corner of his eye and turned to see Viktor making his way out of the Great Hall. His eyes hardened slightly then softened again as he turned to face Hermione.

“I’ll be back soon – I need to talk to someone,” Harry told her. Hermione nodded as Harry moved in and kissed her on the lips before he stroked her cheek with his thumb. He rose and left the Great Hall with Hermione staring after him wearing a dreamy gaze.

Viktor was making his way back to his ship when something interrupted him.

“We need to talk,” a cold male voice spoke and Viktor turned to see Harry standing there.

“I agree,” Viktor told him and followed Harry around to the side of the castle. “What is going on with you and Hermione,” Viktor demanded in his thick accent. Harry glared at Viktor.

“She’s my girlfriend,” Harry informed Viktor coldly. He looked at Harry, appearing startled. “Hermione has made it very clear that she isn’t interested in you, and I don’t like it when my girlfriend comes up to me and tells me that a man is harassing her. This despite her refusal to date him. So now I’m taking over. Leave. Hermione. Alone.”

"I like her," Viktor told him.

"I love her," Harry informed Viktor bluntly, causing Viktor's eyes to widen in surprise. "Leave Hermione alone or you'll have me to deal with – I don't like it when my girlfriend is upset. That means I get upset, and trust me when I say you don't want to deal with me upset."

"She doesn't seem to want me to back off," Viktor remarked slyly but that just pushed the last of Harry's buttons.

Harry let out a growl as he grabbed the lapels of Viktor's robe and pinned him to the wall with a hard thud. Viktor just looked at Harry with a shocked look as his bravado started to falter.

"You listen to me and listen to me carefully," Harry warned in a low tone. "If Hermione tells me that you are still watching her and following her about, you won't live long enough to get arrested for manhandling her. You'll be six feet under Hogwarts' ground when I get through with you!"

Viktor opened his mouth to say something but stopped when the lantern's fire burned even brighter. "You don't want to mess with me. When you mess around with someone I care and love about, you won't be missed when I'm through! I wonder what the papers will say when I tell them about you stalking and manhandling a young female - one who has a boyfriend and has repeatedly rebuffed your advances. It wouldn't go well with any kind of respectable future, would it?"

"You wouldn't d..." Viktor threatened but it was lacking conviction.

"Just try me," Harry warned. "Give me a reason to break your knees."

Hermione was looking for Harry when she heard raised voices and looked around the next corner. When she saw Viktor pinned against the wall with Harry was holding him there, her eyebrows shot up in curiosity.

"I can go to the Ministry and inform them that the Boy-Who-Lived is threatening another champion," Viktor told Harry, who just gave a cold smile in response.

“And I could inform the ministry that one champion is harassing another champion’s girlfriend and that he has manhandled her enough for her to get bruises – which can be classed as assault in the muggle world, by the way. You would get a criminal record for that,” Harry warned Viktor.

Harry was fed up making veiled threats, and he was getting tired of wasting his time with Viktor when he could be with Hermione instead. He decided to make it final and leave with a crystal clear message. “Stay away from Hermione – she has enough trouble without a pathetic idiot causing her even more.” He threw Viktor away from him, making Viktor stumble. “I’ll be watching.”

Viktor hurried away from Harry. A part of him was irritated about running away – the same part of him that wanted to go and get Hermione and make her his for good - but a larger part knew that Harry would make good on his threats.

Harry brushed his hands together and turned around to walk back to the Great Hall only to see Hermione standing there with a small pleased smile on her face, even though her eyes were filled with tears.

“Hermione?” Harry asked and Hermione hurried over to Harry and hugged him, hard.

“Thank you,” Hermione told him as Harry rubbed her back before he pulled away and looked into her eyes.

“He was upsetting you and I don’t like seeing my girl upset,” Harry informed her and Hermione kissed him gently on the lips. He wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her close as she continued to thank him.

Viktor watched from the distance before he bowed his head and admitted defeat. He turned around and walked off, leaving Hermione alone with Harry.

Harry and Hermione were about to make their way up to the castle when Harry heard a rustling sound. Curious, he made his way over to

the bushes when Crouch stumbled out of the foliage, looking deathly pale.

“Mr. Crouch?” Harry asked in surprise. Hermione just looked at the man with a look of confusion on her face.

Crouch fell to his knees as he stumbled toward them. Harry hurried over and helped him lie down before he did any more damage to himself.

“I have an important message to give to Dumbledore...” Crouch mumbled out before he looked at Harry with a curious look on his face as if he was trying to place where he had seen Harry before.

“Mr. Crouch, everything will be okay...” Harry started but he was cut off.

“I need to tell Dumbledore...” Crouch croaked out before his eyes rolled up into the back of his head and his head dropped backward as he took his last breath.

Harry lifted a hand and touched the base of his neck only to find that there wasn't a pulse. He looked up at Hermione before shaking his head.

“He's dead,” Harry told her, causing both of them to share a look that was unreadable.

“What did he need to tell Dumbledore?” Hermione whispered the one question that was on both of their minds.

Draco was sitting in an empty classroom staring at Mia, wondering how he was going to start the conversation about what he had seen the night before. He knew that he should have obliviated himself the second he got back to his room, but common sense had taken over. He was still concerned, however.

Mia was going off the rails this year and it worried him about this getting involved with Cedric. The last he had heard, she was interested in Hunter, but now he caught her kissing Cedric. It was confusing to say at the least.

“I have something to tell you,” Draco started and Mia looked at him, curious about what he was going to say. “I saw you...last night.” Mia frowned in confusion before understanding dawned on her and she turned away with a slight blush to her cheeks.

“Oh god,” she whispered as she leaned forward and buried her face into her hands. “I never thought anyone would see that.”

“What is going on Mia? You’re all over the place,” Draco told her, concerned, and Mia straightened with a sad smile.

“God Draco – what am I going to do?” Mia. “I like two males and I like one better than the other but I can’t be with him!”

“Mia...” Draco didn’t know what to say. He liked someone too and he was worried about getting her involved in his life – especially when she didn’t know anything about him being undercover. They had spoken to each other but it never seemed to go any further than that.

“So, you’re dating Cedric now?” Draco asked and Mia nodded. Draco frowned. “I thought you liked Hunter.”

“I do, but I like Cedric too,” Mia lied. Draco wasn’t convinced and just stared at her until she broke down. “Cedric is safer – I won’t lose him.”

“Mia – it’s not right,” Draco whispered but Mia shook her head.

“It’ll be okay – I like Cedric. I may like Hunter more but in the end, my feelings for Hunter will have to fade – Cedric really likes me and I really like him,” Mia explained. Draco just looked unconvinced while Mia turned her head to the window. “It just has to.” But deep inside of her, she knew that she was making a mistake.

TBC

Chapter 16: Trouble, a Stand and a Kiss.

"We are going to get into so much trouble," a female voice informed the person next to her.

"It will be worth it," the male replied. Then there was a groan of pleasure. "Why did we take so long to get together?"

"We were scared and stupid," the female replied as she slipped her hands into his dark locks, holding him close as he kissed her neck.

"At least we have time now to make up what we missed," he whispered as he pulled away from her neck and kissed her gently on the lips.

After they completed the kiss she pulled away from him and started kissing her way along his jaw line. Once she reached his earlobe she nibbled on gently.

The male groaned as she pushed him back from where he was leaning over her until he was sitting back and straddled him.

His hands slid up from her thighs to her hips as she pulled away from his earlobes and returned to his mouth.

"Shame we don't study Biology here – it would have been a good excuse to explain why we're late," the male stated.

"Harry!" the female scolded with amusement in her voice as she tried to glare – unsuccessfully - at her boyfriend. "You are such a bad boy."

"Why don't you *punish* me," he whispered against her lips before taking them fully into his. He wrapped his arms around her waist and he pushed his hips into her, causing her to moan.

"Don't tempt me," she whispered back as she ran her hands up under his shirt, loving the feel of his hard muscles contracting under her hands. With every movement she made she could feel his reaction, exciting her even more. Once more she pulled her lips away from his and kissed his neck, flicking her tongue over the sweet spot that she had found aroused Harry.

“God...Hermione...” Harry moaned out as he tipped his head back, curling one hand into her hair before he yanked her away from his neck and slammed their lips back together. He turned them around and pressed her against the soft carpet of their now favourite little hideaway.

Dumbledore was sitting in his office, his hands linked and supporting his chin as he was deep in thought. Snape was leaning against the wall across from him as he alternated between looking out of the window and back at Dumbledore.

“What do you think happened?” Snape finally asked, breaking the silence.

“Mr. Crouch obviously had something very important to tell me. But the question of what that was I can not answer,” Dumbledore told him.

“Something had spooked him – you know it,” Snape reminded Dumbledore, who nodded in agreement.

“I know that, but as we have no idea to exactly what had spooked him, we are at a point where we need a new clue to reveal the path. One I fear might appear sooner than we expect,” Dumbledore told the Potions instructor before he looked out of the window with a pensive look. “Until then, we do not let Harry Potter out of our sight.”

Draco was walking in the grounds when he bumped into somebody. Startled, Draco reached out and grabbed the young person before they could fall completely to the ground.

“I’m sorry,” Draco apologised and looked into a pair of dreamy blue eyes. A small smile appeared on his face as she shook her head, causing her radish earrings to swing with her movements.

“It’s not a problem Draco,” Luna informed him in a soft tone. Draco just arched an eyebrow, impressed with the female's ability to feel more comfortable than his reputation would allow just from a look. Though he had heard about her from the others - they had spoken about Luna and her strange way of being able to interact with them.

“Let me guess – you are Luna Lovegood,” Draco told her, startling the younger female. Yet the only give away was the slight widening of her eyes.

“Impressive – you have heard about me,” Luna told him and Draco grinned.

“Yeah, but all good things. Don’t worry,” Draco told her and Luna nodded. She looked over his shoulder and saw one of her classmates calling her. She turned back to Draco.

“It was nice to meet you. Mind you watch out for the pathfinder trickers – they like to lure people away from their path and create heartache for them.” With that she walked off, leaving Draco staring after her as he thought about her words and hoped that she wasn’t making a prediction.

Draco shook his head clear and walked on. But the strange statement kept nagging at his mind. He was so focused on his thoughts that he bumped into another person.

“Oh hell...” Draco muttered as he reached out and once again caught the person before they fell. This time he was staring into a pair of light green eyes and then almost dropped her out of shock.

“Lisa,” he greeted. Lisa Turpin had dark red hair and those light green eyes that were currently sparkling with amusement as she smiled up at Draco.

“Morning Draco – I guess you’re not completely awake yet?” Lisa teased and Draco couldn’t help the chuckle that bubbled out of his chest.

“Sorry – I was in deep thought,” Draco admitted and Lisa nodded. She shifted her books in her arms, causing Draco to look down at them and raise an eyebrow in curiosity. “You like stargazing?” Lisa looked at him in surprise before she looked down at her books and then back up at him with a tender smile.

“Yes. My grandfather used to love stargazing. There was this hill out in the backyard, and every summer night – sometimes winter nights

too - we would sit there and he would point out the constellations and tell me the stories behind them," Lisa told him.

Draco smiled in empathy.

"My grandfather was the same – except it was more about history," Draco explained. Lisa nodded in commiseration before an idea came to her.

"Listen – I'm heading over to the cliff tonight," she pointed to the cliff that overlooked the lake. "If you want to join me stargazing, you're welcome to." Draco smiled at this and looked thoughtfully at her.

"I'll think about it. Thanks for the offer," he told her and Lisa shrugged.

"It's no problem. I'll see you later," Lisa told him as she side-stepped him and walked off.

Draco just watched her retreating back before shaking his head with an amused smile on his face. When he finally made his way to his original destination, he moved over behind some hideaway trees next to the other visitor and sat down next to her.

"I was wondering where you had disappeared to," Draco told her and Hermione turned to face Draco with a tearful smile. "I saw Harry storming through the hallways of Hogwarts and the lanterns flaring up higher than a normal lantern should."

"He's angry – he's really angry," Hermione whispered before she turned back to the lake. "I can't believe that this has happened."

"Do you have any idea how she found out?" Draco asked but got a headshake from Hermione.

"No – it's frustrating and vexing!" Hermione burst out, startling Draco with her sudden anger. "What right does she have to spread those lies and claim that they are the truth? She is only doing this because I threatened her!"

"I know that and you know that, even Harry knows that! But the problem is...you need to get her before it goes any further," Draco told her and Hermione sighed as she ran a hand through her hair.

"But how can I *do* that when I don't know how she getting around – I mean – it's not like she's using an invisibility cloak, because Professor Moody would be able to see her. She can't be using any of the spells that makes her invisible because they aren't perfect..." Hermione trailed off as an idea came to her mind.

"Hermione?" Draco asked, curious to what had occurred to Hermione.

"I think that I finally have an idea about what is going on," Hermione told him, and started heading quickly back to the castle. He looked at her vacated spot for a while to make sure no one would see them leaving the same place and wondered what she had found out.

Ron made his way into the Great Hall with a disgruntled look on his face as he moved over to the Gryffindor table.

"Have you seen the paper today?" Ron demanded as he sat down next to the twins, throwing one down in front of them.

The twins leaned in and looked at it and arched an eyebrow when they saw a picture of Hermione in the middle with Harry and Viktor on each side of her. Underneath was a picture of Harry pinning Viktor against the wall with a look of anger on his face.

Granger plays with Heroes' Hearts screamed the headlines. The twins sighed together as they read the report.

'There have been plenty of reports that Hermione Granger, a muggleborn, has been playing around with two champions' hearts – Harry Potter, the Boy Who Lived, and Viktor Krum, a famous world-class seeker. Harry Potter has even been seen arguing with Viktor Krum over her. This brings one question to everybody's mind – is Hermione Granger using love potions?'

"What the hell...how is she getting all this information?" Fred demanded but got a shrug from Ron, indicating that he didn't have a clue. "Has Mia seen this?" Ron shook his head.

"I don't think so. Even if she did, she's not going to do anything, though. Sirius has put a lock-down on her. She's not allowed to cause trouble until after the summer," Ron explained.

George frowned at this, confused. "How do you mean?" George asked.

"Because she kept losing her temper. Harry was worried that Mia was going to burn herself out before Christmas, so he contacted Sirius and he came down hard on Mia. He doesn't want to hear her getting into trouble for the rest of the year," Ron explained before shrugging. "She's doing what he told her so far, and that means no getting worked up over anything in the papers. Of course that also means that we're all working double time just to make sure she doesn't get the paper."

"Not that it's easy," Dean jumped into the conversation and Lavender nodded too.

"She gets the paper delivered to her room in the morning. If it doesn't come there, she just assumes that it has been sent to the common room. If it's not in the common room, then it's in the Great Hall. Someone has to be distracting her at each of those locations so that she'll forget about it," Lavender told them.

"Merlin," Fred muttered as he looked at the papers once more before shaking his head.

"What?" Ron asked. Fred looked at him before glancing at the paper once more then again raised up to look at Ron.

"Mum replied to the letter. She is totally convinced that Hermione is using a love potion on Harry because it was obvious that Harry would never be interested in a girl like her," Fred told him.

Ron groaned as he buried his face into his hands. Now he knew what had riled Harry up so much. To hear her saying that about his girlfriend just meant that she had pissed him off to hell. He was extremely glad that Mia hadn't gotten the paper yet today, or Hogwarts would be in pieces by now – if Harry didn't get there first.

"I can't believe she did that," George stated as he took the paper from Fred before shaking his head as he read the statement. "Doesn't she know that she is embarrassing herself?"

"Of course she doesn't – she has her head too far up her ass to tell that Harry doesn't like Ginny!" Ron snapped out, startling the people at the same table. Ron just let out a slow breath as he closed his eyes and counted to ten, hoping that he wasn't going to blow up.

"Take a deep breath," a female voice spoke up as a small soft hand was placed on his shoulder. Ron turned to see Luna sitting beside him with a concerned look on her face. "That's it – just take your time."

"I'm sorry," Ron apologised to his brothers and they looked at him in surprise. "All she has done is create problems for Hermione. It's not her fault that she fell in love with Harry, and it's not Harry's fault that he fell in love with Hermione and not Ginny. All I want is our mother is to back off and let them to live their lives in peace."

"We understand," Fred told him. Ron looked at him in shock at his simple agreement and Fred smiled. "We know that Mum has been overbearing about Harry, Hermione and Ginny and you have our support. When you are ready to tell off mum, we're right there."

Ron couldn't help the smile that appeared on his face at the sight of his brothers backing him up. He turned to look at Luna and found that she was also happy and smiling softly back at him.

When Harry entered the common room he stopped when he saw Hermione sitting in front of the fire and throwing letters into the flames. She was watching them burn with a sad look on her face.

"Hermione?" Harry asked as he moved to her and sat down next to her. Hermione looked at him.

"Letters and howlers from the readers and the fans of 'the Boy Who Lived' demanding that I stop using love potions and release you from my trap," Hermione explained. Harry felt his features harden at the sight of the stack of letters remaining before he shook his head, took

the whole bundle into his hands, and threw them into the fireplace without looking at them at all.

Hermione just looked at the fire with the burning letters before she looked at Harry once more.

"These people are not worth it – the next time you get a batch of those letters, either send them back or put it in the fire right away," Harry told her before he shifted closer to her and wrapped his arms around her body. "I don't care what anyone says – I'm with you because I *want* to be. Not because these idiots think you have a love potion on me."

"I think I know how Rita is getting around and getting the stories without anyone seeing her," Hermione spoke up and Harry looked at her hopefully.

Mia was in the library, looking through the shelves for a book when she heard a noise behind her. Startled, Mia spun around with her hands curling into fists. She brought them up into a fighting stance when her eyes met startled yet amused brown eyes.

"Hunter," Mia gasped out and Hunter looked down at her raised fists before he looked back into her blue eyes.

"Are you going to punch me?" Hunter asked. Mia looked at him, confused, until she looked down at her hands and blushed softly before she dropped her fists, uncurling them.

"Sorry, just a reaction that happens when I hear an unexpected noise behind me," Mia explained. "Some of the older guys like to try and sneak up behind me." Hunter nodded in understanding. "So, is there something you wanted?" Mia asked.

"I just wanted to talk to you," Hunter told her as he moved closer to her.

"Why?" Mia asked; confused about why Hunter would want to talk to her.

Hunter just bent his head and kissed her on the lips, wrapping his arms around her waist.

Mia's eyes widened in shock before they fluttered closed in pleasure. Her arms lifted themselves and wrapped around his neck, holding him in the kiss as she opened her mouth. She moaned when she felt his tongue slip into her mouth and caress her own.

Hunter moved Mia back until her she was against the bookcase and held her up as he pressed himself against her body. Mia's hands slipped into his dark hair as Hunter slipped his fingers under her top, each trailing a fire of pleasure across her skin.

Mia couldn't believe how she felt. Her skin was heating up and her lips tingled. His fingers were trailing fire all over her skin wherever he touched. She could barely think.

It wasn't like when she was kissing Cedric. No, this was...wonderful...sexier...arousing! Mia let out a soft groan when Hunter nibbled her bottom lip before tugging it and then allowed it to slip from his mouth, sending shivers of pleasure through her body before he took her lips back into his.

No, with Cedric – it was nice and safe and comforting, but with Hunter...it was hot and it was taking her to a new level – one that she didn't want to leave.

With Cedric...

Cedric...

Mia's eyes snapped open before she pushed Hunter away, shaking her head at what had just happened.

"Mia?" Hunter asked but Mia shook her head.

"This can't happen," Mia told him. "I'm sorry, but it can't happen." She pushed herself away from him and ran out of the library altogether.

Hunter just stared at the space that Mia had vacated before he touched his lips and found them swollen.

What the hell had just happened?

Mia didn't stop running until she reached her common room. She hurriedly gave the password to the painting before hurrying through the doorway and startling the students that were milling around inside.

Mia didn't notice them as she hurried up the girls' stairway. When she reached her room that she slammed the door behind her and leaned back against the door.

Thankfully, no one was in the room with her and Mia closed her eyes as she tried to calm her pounding heart.

"What happened to you?" a female voice demanded, startling Mia as she eyes flew open. She saw Hermione standing in front of her, acting confused at her sister's reaction. "Mia?"

"I've just done something I shouldn't have," Mia admitted and Hermione frowned in worry and confusion.

"Mia?" Hermione asked.

"I kissed Hunter," Mia blurted out before she frowned and shook her head. "No, he kissed me! Shit!" she pressed her shaking hands to her face as she tried to regain her composure.

"What?" Hermione asked, alarmed by her best friend's behaviour. Mia just swore again and slid down against the door. Hermione moved closer to Mia and wrapped an arm around her shoulders as Mia haltingly spilled out everything that had happened. First with her and Cedric, then her and Hunter, and her feelings about it all.

Hermione just stared at Mia, stunned that she had kept it all in for as long as she had. Mia then asked the one question that has been burning into her mind.

"What am I going to do?" Mia whispered.

TBC

Chapter 17: Newspapers, a Choice and the Last Task

“Hermione Granger Equals Love Potions?” the headline of the paper screamed. Harry just stared at it with a stony glare. The article went on to talk about how Hermione was obviously using a love potion on Harry just to be famous. They even used Molly Weasley’s letter from the previous edition as a proof.

Harry couldn’t help the anger raging throughout his body. He was getting sick and tired of seeing Hermione’s name plastered across the headlines in a negative light just because she was with him. She was dating Harry Potter – not the bloody ‘Boy Who Lived’ - despite what apparently nearly everyone else thought.

Just what right did these people have to think they knew what was best for Harry? Harry knew what was best for him – Sirius being his guardian, Mia being his sister and cheerleader, and Hermione being his girlfriend. She was the one reason why he got up in the morning and the one person who kept him sane.

They were the ones who had turned their backs on him when they had presumed him dead. They were the ones who turned their backs on him when they had thought he was he was being trained to become the next dark lord and take after Voldemort! Did they forget that his mother was a muggleborn? That his girlfriend was a muggleborn? They had turned their backs on him at the beginning of the year, convinced that he had entered his name into the tournament just to get more fame – what gave them the right?

He felt a soft thud and lifted his head over the paper to see Mia sitting across from him. Her hair was pulled back into a ponytail and she was dressed in her jeans and one of his old blue hoodies that she had nicked from him.

“Morning Harry,” Mia greeted with a cheerful smile. After having spent most of the night talking with Hermione over her feelings, Mia was determined to give herself a break from boys and just deal with Harry first this morning.

“Morning Mia,” Harry replied.

As she filled up her plate, she looked up and saw the paper in Harry's hands and her eyes lit up.

"Oh! Can I borrow the paper? I haven't read it over the last couple of weeks – they keep disappearing," Mia told him with a puzzled frown. Harry hesitated, only increasing Mia's puzzlement. "Harry – is something wrong?"

"Nothing Mia," Harry told her with a small smile. "There's nothing interesting in the paper anyway." Mia arched an eyebrow as she leaned over and bent the top of the paper back with her hands.

"Then why were you staring at it when I came in?" Mia asked as she tried to tug it out of his hands but Harry was clinging on to the bottom part. "Harry – let go!"

"Mia, I really don't think..." Harry started but lost his speech when the paper slipped out of his hands and into Mia's. She promptly turned it around as she sat down only to lose her temper.

"WHAT THE HELL?!" Mia shouted, startling the students and teachers that were having their breakfast quietly. But Mia didn't notice them as she continued to glare at the headline story before she looked at Harry with a furious glare. "How long has this been going on?" she demanded.

"A few weeks," Harry admitted and Mia growled under her breath.

"Is this the reason why I've not been getting the paper?" Mia demanded as she scanned the story a bit more. "And what the HELL has that bitch been saying about Hermione?"

Harry winced. She must have spotted Molly's statement/letter.

"Miss Black!" a female voice snapped and she turned to see Professor McGonagall nearing her. "I'd thank you to not to use that language in this castle!"

"Sorry Professor," Mia apologised, chastised for her outburst. She turned back to the paper, crumpled it up and threw it away as the teacher walked away. Mia turned to look at Harry. "Find Skeeter and

get rid of her – one way or another. Or I'm going down for murder. No one talks about Hermione like this and gets away with it." With that, Mia stood up with her plate and walked out of the Great Hall.

Hermione came in shortly after Mia left and arched an eyebrow when she saw Harry sitting at the table with his head in his hands. Curious, Hermione moved closer to the table and sat down next to Harry.

Harry felt another soft thump and winced softly to himself before he lifted his head and saw Hermione sitting there with a curious expression clear on her face.

"Mia saw the newspaper this morning," Harry told her and understanding dawned on her and she nodded.

"Let me guess, she freaked out?" Hermione asked.

"More like shouted with rage, actually" Harry told her as he speared his meat with a fork before twirling it slowly. "McGonagall gave her a bit of trouble for swearing."

"But she didn't yank anyone out of the Great Hall with the intent on dismembering them, right?" Hermione asked and got a head shake in reply. "She'll be fine once she has calmed down – providing she doesn't meet someone who will piss her off in the hallway," Hermione informed Harry, calmly and rationally.

Harry just arched an eyebrow at Hermione, wondering about the change in her before he shook his head and decided to go with the flow.

"Anyway," Hermione started only to be cut off when she felt soft lips pressed against hers. Her eyes widened slightly before she closed her eyes in pleasure. She slid a hand up Harry's neck and into his hair as she enjoyed the "good morning" kiss, oblivious to the gasps and whispers that started up around them.

When Ron made his entrance at that moment he was surprised to see Harry and Hermione kissing and everyone was watching them. He shook his head as he moved closer to the table and cleared his throat, attracting Harry and Hermione's attention.

“Hello – welcome to Hogwarts, where students go to learn about magic...not biology,” Ron informed them, causing Hermione to blush when she noticed everyone staring at them and Harry to duck his head slightly in embarrassment.

But Ron saw the two of them sneak a look at each other before small grins appeared on their faces and they turned back to their breakfasts. Ron could only shake his head again.

At first, he had been happy that they had gotten together, but now he was wishing that they would quit making out or at least find a private space to make out!

“So, where’s Mia?” Ron asked, looking around for the black-haired female.

“She stormed out of here after reading the paper,” Harry replied. Ron looked at him, stunned, and coughed on the food that got stuck in his throat.

Dean reached over and patted Ron’s back until Ron’s breathing had returned to normal but that just allowed Ron’s mood to take over.

“You let Mia READ the paper?” Ron demanded. “Are you INSANE?”

“What is your problem?” Hermione asked, curious about Ron’s reaction. Ron just goggled at Hermione with a stunned look on his face.

“Hello? Mia Black – the same person who chewed out Dumbledore in first year, the same person who chewed out that fraud in second year, the same person who chewed out Lucius Malfoy AND the minister in third year and the same person who wants the Ministry overturned because of the Triwizarding Tournament?” Ron reminded. “I actually like this school and would rather NOT have it in pieces because some idiot woman is sprouting lies about you!”

“She’s fine,” Hermione told Ron, who just arched an eyebrow while Dean frowned.

“Didn’t she tell Harry that he was to find some way to put down Skeeter as fast as possible or she was going to go down for murder?” Dean asked. Harry muttered under his breath as Hermione turned to face her boyfriend with a curious look and got a half hearted shrug in return before she sighed.

“I suppose it’s a good thing that her father is coming up today – I don’t think Hogwarts would have lasted another day otherwise,” Hermione admitted and got nods of agreement in return.

Sirius Black stood in front of the Hogwarts doors before frowning and looked around to make sure that the pesky ghost commonly known as Peeves weren’t sneaking up behind him. He had spent too much time looking over his shoulder thanks to that damn ghost and he would be damned if he was going to stop being cautious now.

Cautiously, Sirius inched his way to the door and opened it slightly - just enough to stick his head through the gap and look around.

“Mr Black, just what are you up to you?” a female voice cracked loudly from behind him, causing him to jump and feel like a teenager all over again. He turned around to see Professor McGonagall peering at him over her glasses as she folded her arms across her chest, clearly waiting hear what her former student had to say.

“Peeves,” Sirius blurted out only to sigh in self-frustration. “I’m looking out for Peeves - I don’t trust him not to jump out of somewhere just to annoy me.” McGonagall nodded in understanding before she pushed the door open and pushed Sirius through.

“Don’t worry about Peeves – Mr Filch is taking care of him. Go and meet your daughter and nephew. I daresay that your daughter needs you at the moment,” McGonagall informed him as she also stepped in and closed the doors.

Sirius watched her leave down the hallway with a curious expression before he turned to go to the Great Hall only to spot his daughter already coming down the stairs. Mia looked up and a smile brightened up her face when she spotted her father.

“Dad!” Mia greeted happily as she threw herself into her father’s arms. Sirius kissed her hair as he held her close to him before grinning at Harry over his daughter’s head. He opened his other arm and allowed his “son” to run into his arms and held both of his children close to him.

“I missed you,” Mia mumbled into Sirius’ chest before she pulled away and looked up in her father’s face.

“I missed you too,” Sirius told her as he kissed her forehead. “And I’m glad to see that you are slowing down.” Mia gave him a sweet smile before she pulled out of his arm and stood next to Hermione before he turned down to face Harry. “And you – what is this about you threatening Viktor Krum?” Hermione coloured slightly while Harry sighed.

“He was stalking Hermione and scaring her. I didn’t like him harassing her and decided to make my feelings clear about it,” Harry told him and Sirius nodded, still curious. “Besides – we think we know how Rita Skeeter has been getting all her ‘inside information’ for the papers.”

Sirius arched an eyebrow in anticipation.

Hermione was about to tell him when a very familiar voice broke in and anger started to fill her veins.

“Harry dear!” a female voice called out and Harry spun around to see Molly walking toward him with a huge grin on her face with Ginny trailing her, also wearing a pleased look on her face.

“What the hell are you doing here?” Harry demanded, startling Molly into faltering slightly.

“Harry,” a female hand came down on his shoulder and Harry turned to see Mia standing behind him with a warning glint in her blue eyes. “It’s not your battle – it’s hers.” Harry turned to see Hermione making her way over to the Weasley women with a hard glint in her normally soft brown eyes.

"Mrs. Weasley, you are not welcome here," Hermione informed her. Molly shot Hermione a cold glare.

"Excuse me?" Molly demanded; infuriated with the young girl who thought she could meddle with people's hearts.

"You heard me – there is no reason for you to be here," Hermione informed her. Ginny just crossed her arms and glared at the young rival who had stolen her hero's heart from her.

"We are here to support Harry, he is family after all," Molly informed her snootily, but Hermione gave a scathing laugh, startling everyone in earshot as they had never heard Hermione sound so cynical.

"Family? You are nothing but a self-absorbed and bossy woman who should get her head out of her ass and realise that Harry isn't interested in your bitch of a daughter. He can actually make his own choices without the aid of a potion or an interfering harridan." Hermione calmly told Molly.

"You..." Molly raised her hand to slap Hermione when a hand caught Molly's wrist, startling her.

"Touch my best friend and you'll be begging for mercy," Mia informed her with a cold glare. "No one touches Hermione with the intent of harming her."

"And just what would you do? You're nothing but a little girl who still plays dress up," Molly informed the Black girl with a snooty glare and Mia snorted back a laugh.

"Says the woman who is convinced that Harry actually likes your daughter?" Mia asked before shaking her head. "You're pathetic."

"Harry *does* like my daughter and they *will* get together. No one will get in the way of that. Just like Hermione is perfect for my Ronald," Molly informed them with a scathing glare – one that just infuriated Hermione even more.

"No we won't!" Hermione shouted; startling the other students and guests as everyone turned to see what was going on. "Sorry – but

Ron and I are just friends! I'm with Harry and that is the way that it's going to stay. Harry is not interested in your daughter and I'm not interested in your son and your son isn't interested in me." Hermione breathed heavily. "You are not going to get your happy family despite anything you say or do and trust me when I say you don't want to cross me."

"You will fall for Ron and Harry will for Ginny – it's the way it's meant to be," Molly snapped but faltered when she saw Hermione's dark eyes flash blue for a moment as Hermione moved closer. Her voice had suddenly dropped an octave lower but was still cold and hard.

"You don't always get what you want," Hermione reminded the older woman before she spun on her heels. She was obviously about to move away when Molly's voice rang out once more.

"You are evil! You are holding Harry under a spell!" Molly screeched.

"Whatever," Mia and Hermione stated together before they linked arms and walked out of the Great Hall, leaving a stunned group behind them. Hunter just smothered a smirk while Fleur shook her head and followed Hunter as he led the way over to Bill Weasley.

"Bill Weasley?" Hunter asked and Bill turned only to be struck dumb when he saw Fleur. She was a tall blonde with deep blue eyes and she was giving him a shy grin.

"Yeah?" Bill asked, distracted, and Hunter smothered another grin at how smoothly this plan was going.

"This is Fleur Delacour, one of the champions – I wanted to introduce you because she is planning on coming back to England during the summer and Mia mentioned that you worked at Gringotts. I was hoping that you would be able to show her around," Hunter explained.

Bill narrowed his eyes as he turned to face him, and so did Sirius when he heard the male speak of Mia's name.

"And you are?" Bill asked.

“Oh, I’m Hunter Wolfe – I’m new here because I transferred here this year,” Hunter explained and Sirius frowned slightly when Hunter mentioned his last name before he turned to Harry.

“Who is this Hunter guy and how does Mia know him?” Sirius asked. Harry arched an eyebrow at his uncle.

“Mia and Hermione just chewed out and humiliated Mrs. Weasley and you’re worried about some guy that Mia knows?” Harry asked disbelievingly and Remus laughed slightly.

“Don’t worry – they’ll get what’s coming to them. Just answer the question,” Remus informed Harry, who sighed.

“Hunter Wolfe is the new guy who entered this year. He is a year above us and in Slytherin. He and Mia have gotten to know each other over the year – when Mia isn’t freezing him out that is,” Harry informed them. Remus nodded while Sirius looked toward Hunter with a thoughtful look on his face.

“You okay?” Mia asked from where she was lying, stretched out in the sunlight. Hermione looked down at her from where she was leaning on her arms.

“I feel better,” Hermione admitted and Mia laughed.

“You really chewed out Molly Weasley, so I’m not surprised,” Mia informed her as she tilted her head to allow the sun to shine on her face.

“I’m gonna get in trouble though,” Hermione reminded her and Mia nodded.

“Yeah, I know. And the guilt will kick in real soon too so just enjoy the victory while you’re still guilt-free. When it kicks in, you’re gonna be beating yourself up like mad,” Mia warned her.

“How do you do it?” Hermione asked Mia curiously. “How do you chew people out and not feel guilty about it?” Mia snorted.

"I feel guilty every second of the day and I think to myself, 'Why did I do that? Could I have done it a different way?' I know I don't act like I feel guilty about it, but I'm just good at hiding my feelings when it's needed," Mia explained before shrugging. "A bad habit of mine that I can't seem to break."

Hermione laughed as she fell back onto the grass so that her head was next to Mia's but upside down.

"Seems like we all have some bad habits," Hermione stated with a soft sigh and Mia nodded.

"What are you going to do about Rita Skeeter?" Mia asked and got a devilish grin in reply. "Now I know I've most definitely been rubbing off on you."

"Let's just say that I have a few plans up my sleeves, and then Harry will be taking over. A threat from the Boy-Who-Lived is bound to put the fear of the devil into anyone, isn't it?" Hermione asked and Mia giggled at the thought.

"Viktor hasn't been anywhere near you," Mia confirmed and Hermione sighed with a soft shake of her head.

"All he had to do was leave me alone, and none of that would have happened," Hermione told her and Mia shrugged.

"He was interested in you – I know, he went about it the wrong way, but the guy is used to girls falling over his feet," Mia told her. "At least he is leaving you alone now. I think Harry would have burst a vein if he hadn't."

"What about you? Have you decided about what you're going to do?" Hermione asked while Mia shifted her eyes toward the sky.

"I'm taking a break from the guys. I need a break from them. All these mixed emotions are getting too much for me and I just want to concentrate on Harry getting past the last task so that we can relax for the summer," Mia told her. Hermione nodded in understanding before a slight frown ceased her forehead.

“But you should still make a choice soon,” Hermione told her, leaving both girls staring at the sky in silence.

Cedric was sitting on the stone bench in the middle of the courtyard as he stared up at the same sky. It was beginning to change colour with the beginning of the sunset.

He had made up his mind. He was going to ask Mia out tonight. Hopefully she would agree to be his girlfriend. A tender smile crossed his face at the thought. Mia was different from anyone he had ever met, and he couldn't wait to see what else she could do.

“Cedric?” a female voice called out and Cedric brought his head down and turned to see who had called his name.

Cedric smiled when he saw Mia heading toward him. She was wearing an off-the-shoulder light blue top that complimented her eyes and a pair of black jeans along with her trainers.

“Hey,” Mia greeted with a bright smile. “What did you want to see me for?” Cedric held out a blood red rose. Mia arched an eyebrow at the rose before looking at him.

“I care about you,” Cedric told her. Mia smiled as she took the rose before tucking back a strand of her hair.

“I care about you too,” Mia, told him and Cedric led her over to one of the stone benches where they both sat down. Mia twisted her body to face Cedric, wondering where he was going with this.

“I don't have much time because the last task is going to be starting soon,” Cedric told her and Mia nodded. “Being with you this year, it's been amazing.” Mia's cheeks blushed slightly and Cedric lifted a hand and placed it on her cheek, rubbing his thumb over it. “When I come back, I want us to try and see if we could potentially have a relationship.”

Mia's eyes snapped up to his in shock.

“What?” Mia asked in a whisper.

“Mia, would you like to become my girlfriend?” Cedric asked and Mia couldn’t help the tender smile that crossed her face.

“Yes,” Mia whispered. Cedric smiled as he leaned in but Mia lifted a hand to stop him. “But I have something I need to tell you.”

“Mia...” Cedric started but he dropped his hand from her face and looked over her shoulder.

Mia turned to see Professor Flitwick standing behind them.

“Sorry to interrupt you,” Flitwick told them in his squeaky voice. “But all the champions must get ready for the task.”

“Thank you Professor Flitwick, I’ll be there in a minute,” Cedric told his head of house. Flitwick nodded before he left and Cedric resumed looking at Mia. “Sorry, how about we talk about it after the task?”

“Yeah,” Mia told him with a nod before they stood up, linked hands and made their way over to the tent so that Cedric could get changed and so that Mia could see Harry.

Harry was standing near his section dressed in his black trousers and red and black top with Hermione in his arms. He held her close to him, alternating between kissing her hair and whispering in her ear.

Viktor was standing slightly off to the side, sneaking looks toward Harry and Hermione with a sad look on his face before he turned to face Dumbledore as he stepped into the tent.

Fleur was nervously pacing back and forth as she twirled her wand in her fingers while Madam Maxime watched her with a tender look.

Cedric and Mia stepped into the tent together. Cedric squeezed Mia’s hand before he let her go so she could go over to stand with her brother before he moved over to where his father was standing and sighed at the disapproving look that was showing on the senior Diggory’s face as he watched Mia walk away from Cedric.

When Cedric stood next to his father, he got a look that clearly stated that they were going to have a talk about his tastes in girls just as

Cho stepped in, looking around for Cedric and smiled when she spotted him and made her way over to him.

Cedric couldn't help the tender smile that crossed his face when he saw her. They had dated for a short time till Cedric realised that he really liked Mia and Cho had shown an interest in another boy that they had agreed to spilt up.

"I just came to wish you good luck," Cho told him and Cedric grinned before he looked his father and groaned inwardly when he saw the light in his eyes that indicated that his father had something up his sleeve and it was most likely due to he didn't really like Mia Black.

"Thanks," Cedric told the female before he embraced her in a hug before looking toward Mia only to find that she was wrapped up in Harry's arms with Hermione as the male tried to comfort both of them.

"I'm going to be fine," Harry soothed the two of them and they nodded but still clung to him like mad. "I'm gonna run out of air soon but I'll be fine." Both girls jumped away from him like he was on fire only to glare at him when they saw his pleased smirk on his face.

"Jerk," Hermione scolded and got an eye roll in return.

"You and I are going to have a little talk about your rant to Mrs. Weasley," Harry warned Hermione, who nodded as she had expected it.

Dumbledore stepped into the tent and cleared his throat, causing everyone to turn to him.

"If the people who are not participating in the task would like to head up to the seating areas while the Champions and their supporter please follow me," Dumbledore told them. Everyone nodded as they started to do his bidding.

"Fleur, good luck," Mia told the blonde and the blonde smiled before they both embraced. Both of them had become good friends after they bumped into each other in the library.

“Thank you,” Fleur whispered and Mia nodded as she pulled away and smiled into the blonde’s face.

“I’ll be rooting for you and Harry and Cedric,” Mia listed, causing Fleur to laugh as Mia squeezed her arm before she left the tent all together with Hermione.

Harry took a deep breath as one by one the champion left the tent with the person that was representing them – Viktor with the new headmaster considering that their old one had left. Fleur walked out with Madam Maxime, Cedric walked out with his father and Harry walked out with Sirius onto the stage in front of the maze.

Dumbledore moved to the middle of the stage while each championship neared the entrance of the maze that they were to enter – each one had their own entrance.

“Everyone – welcome to the last task of the Triwizarding Championship and this will reveal the winner of the Triwizarding cup!”

The students cheered and clapped while the Gryffindor and Draco just clapped weakly, uncertain of what they were going to face next. All they could do was hope that Harry would come out of this task unscathed.

“Harry,” Sirius started as he placed his hand on Harry’s shoulder and the younger male looked toward Harry. “Do the best you can and stay safe – it’s not worth it if you’re dead in the end.” Harry nodded and Sirius gave a soft smile. “If you win or lose – I’m proud of you for making it this far.” Harry grinned as he moved in closer and hugged his uncle once more. Sirius just hugged his nephew hard before he took a step back and watched as Harry faced the entrance of the maze.

“This task is filled with danger. You will meet more in this task that you will do on the wizarding planet on a normal day,” Dumbledore warned the champions. “Take care and remember – the eye can be easily tricked.”

The champions nodded as they all turned to face the maze once more. “Harry Potter gains more time to enter the maze – he will go

first then Cedric is second. Viktor is third and Fleur is last.” The champions nodded their understanding once more and Dumbledore raised his wand into the air and shot a spark out of it, starting the race and Harry ran into the maze only to stop when he saw the hedges melding together, blocking his way out.

“Oh hell,” Harry muttered and ran in further into the maze, looking around so he could get a way to get to the cup. Vaguely, he heard the other sparks going off, announcing the time for the other champions to get in.

Harry rounded a corner only to stop when he saw a Dementor heading toward him with a gnarly hand reaching out toward him and his mother screams rang in his head. Harry’s hands reached up and covered his ears.

“Expecto Patronum!” Harry shouted but the white stag did nothing. It didn’t make the Dementor back off or howl in agony. Understanding dawned on Harry and he lifted his wand and yelled out ‘Riddikulus!’ the boggart changed from the black cloaked monster to Hermione standing in front of him, winking and smiling.

Harry let out a relieved sigh before he rushed on past the boggart and moved through the maze at a furious speed only to stop when he saw something that he recognised but it was twice bigger than the last time he saw.

“Holy...”

“Shit!” Draco exclaimed. “Is that one of those Blast-ended skrewts that Hagrid brought to his class?” Draco demanded to everyone and got nods in return.

Hermione was just staring at Harry with a stunned look on her face. She had seen the Boggart change from a Dementor to her image and couldn’t help the blush that had crossed her face at the scene while Mia just snickered next to her.

“Told you that Harry fancied you,” Mia told her only to get an elbow in her side. Now they were staring at the Blast-ended skrewt with a look of horror on their faces.

“Now we know why Hagrid brought them to Hogwarts,” Dean stated only to get worried looks in his directions from the girls.

Harry raised his wand as he readied himself to battle with the Blast-ended skrewt only to jump to the side when it shot a fire ball. Harry dropped to the ground and rolled away just the creature ran toward him with the intent on crushing him to death.

Harry stood up only for a stinging shot to hit him in the shoulder. Harry let out a groan as his hand came up to cup his shoulder before he gritted his teeth and looked up at the creature with a hard glare and raised his good arm with his wand and shot out a spell.

The red light glowed in the darkness as it shot toward the creature. It hit the back of the creature and it blew apart under the force of the spell.

Harry ducked backward under the hedge as the pus shot all over the grass and the hedge, burning them. Once everything settled down, Harry came out of the hedge and looked around before wincing as the pain shot through his arm before he moved on, desperate to find a way to end this task for good.

Everyone just stared at messy section with a dumbfounded look on their faces. They couldn't believe what they had just witnessed. It wasn't possible. There was no way that just happened. Right?

“He blew up the creature!” Pansy shouted out with fear in her voice.

“Harry Potter just blew up a Blast-ended skrewt!” another student shouted.

“That isn't possible...is it?” another student asked.

“Well...he is the boy who lived,” a student replied, helpfully but that just increased the fear that was already bubbling in everyone.

Harry staggered slightly as he shook his head before he lifted a hand to his wound and concentrated on dispelling the poison and healed the wound slightly but not enough. Sweat beaded on his forehead at

the concentration and force it took to heal his wound before he let out a sigh of relief.

Harry looked around only to hear a high piercing scream. His heart stopped when he realised the scream and started to run in the same direction, hoping that he would get there in time to save Fleur from what ever that was happening to her.

Harry rounded the corner of the maze and saw Fleur running away from who ever it was that was chasing her. Her blue eyes widen when she saw Harry and relief started to fill them.

“Harry!” Fleur screamed only for a red light to hit her back and she fell to the ground with a hard thud. Harry watched in horror as the roots of the hedges crept out and started to wrap themselves around the blonde still body and slowly pulled her under the hedge where she would be held captive.

Harry made to go forward to prevent that from happening when a red light shot past him, narrowly missing him.

Startled, Harry looked up and saw that Viktor was heading toward him with a malice look in his eyes. A feral grin crept on his face when he caught sight of the black haired male and raised his wand once more only to be flung back ward when a red light hit him in his stomach, hard.

Harry, breathing heavily, dropped his wand and looked toward Fleur had been only to find that she was gone. Groaning in frustration, Harry raised his wand and sent out two red sparks to indicate that two people needed help before he ran off – he needed to find Cedric to make sure that he was okay and hopefully find the cup at the same time so he could bring an end to this nightmare.

While Harry was running about, he heard a groan and looked down in one of the maze direction and found Cedric fighting the roots that were trying to drag him underground.

“Cedric!” Harry shouted as he ran toward Cedric, using his wand to cut the roots and make them back off. The roots snapped the air and the ground as they tried to scare of Harry and reclaim their victim but

Harry was too fast for them and he managed to grab Cedric's hand and pull him to safety.

"Oh, thank god," Cedric breathed out.

"Viktor took out Fleur – it looked like he was under the imperious curse," Harry explained as he tried to catch his breath and Cedric nodded in understanding.

"He attacked me – he just left me when he heard Fleur scream," Cedric told him and Harry nodded before something caught his eye and nodded his head in the direction. Cedric turned and hope filled them both.

The triwizarding cup was sitting on a pedestal and all they had to do was reach the cup and this nightmare would be over – they would be freed.

Both men got up and moved toward the cup while keeping a wary eye about to prevent any other creature from trying to get them when they reached the cup and they looked each other.

"We'll both grab the cup – we both represent Hogwarts – we'll take it back to Hogwarts," Harry told him. Cedric just looked at Harry before a slow grin appeared on his face and he nodded as they both reached out and grabbed the portkey only to feel a familiar tug at their navel before they disappeared.

Mia stood up in shock as her eyes widen, Hermione also stood up, clinging to Mia's hand as her face whitened as her eyes filled with terror as her stomach started to clench.

"We've got a problem!" Mia shouted and everyone looked at her. "Harry and Cedric have disappeared – the cup was a portkey!"

TBC

Chapter 18: The past, present and future.

Harry fell to the ground with a hard thud before he pushed himself up by his arms and looked around, confused.

He was in a graveyard. The thick fog clung to the ground. Next to him, Cedric stirred and looked around.

“Where are we?” Cedric asked.

“In a graveyard,” Harry replied.

“Is this part of the task?” Cedric asked but got a head shake in return.

“No. Otherwise Dumbledore wouldn’t have said that we needed to bring the cup back to him. Plus, Viktor was under the imperious – that means this was all set up,” Harry explained as both men got up and moved closer to the tombstones to get a better idea of where they were when Cedric noticed a large cauldron bubbling away near the edge of the woods.

“What would a cauldron be doing here?” Cedric asked, mostly to himself.

Harry found himself staring at a large tombstone that was slightly further away from the cauldron. He read the inscription on the tombstone and paled. The Tombstone was a large statue that looked like the reaper was guarding over the grave.

“Here lays Tom Riddle,” Harry whispered. “Shit!” Cedric looked up, alarmed.

“Harry?” he questioned but Harry couldn’t tear his eyes from the stone as fear started to coil in his body.

“We need to leave,” Harry told him.

“What? Why?” Cedric asked.

“This isn’t a safe place to be – let’s go!” Harry told him. Cedric moved forward toward Harry as Harry moved closer to the trophy but a raspy voice stopped them in their tracks and sent chills down their spine.

“Kill the spare,” the voice ordered.

“NO!” Harry shouted when he heard the familiar incantation and the green light shot toward Cedric as he turned to face the voice, striking him dead.

Cedric fell to the ground with a soft thud. His eyes were open and his mouth was slightly open in shock.

Harry fell to his knees as he stared at the dead body for a short moment before he raised dark eyes.

“Wormtail,” Harry whispered and took pleasure in seeing Peter shaking with fear.

Harry was about to rush over to Wormtail when Wormtail flicked his wand and Harry was flung backward into the statue above Tom Riddle’s grave and the statue wrapped its arms around Harry, trapping him.

Wormtail walked over toward the cauldron with a black bundle in his arm and Harry could, instinctively, tell that it was Voldemort. Wormtail opened the black robes and an unnatural white baby fell into the cauldron with a splash.

“Flesh of a servant,” Wormtail cut off his own hand with a hiss. With a soft splash, his hand went into the cauldron and Wormtail pointed his wand toward the grave underneath Harry’s feet. “Bone of a flesh,” Voldemort’s father bone rose out of the grave and floated over to the cauldron and was dropped in.

Wormtail moved forward toward Harry, raising the dagger and he tore it down Harry’s arm, drawing blood which dripped into the goblet just beneath Harry’s hand.

“Blood of an unwilling rival,” Harry just gritted his teeth from the pain as he watched Wormtail moved back over to the cauldron and tipped the goblet, pouring the blood into the water.

“Raise my lord; take your place among the world today!” Wormtail shouted and a figure rose out of the cauldron, naked.

“Voldemort,” Harry whispered. Voldemort stood there in his glory while Wormtail walked over with a black robe and slipped it over his master’s shoulders. Voldemort stepped out of the cauldron before he looked around and saw Wormtail standing there.

Harry could see that Voldemort wasn’t human anymore. His face was drawn and pale while he had no nose but slits for nostrils. It gave Harry the impression of seeing a human snake.

“Give me your hand,” Voldemort held out his arm.

“Oh my lord...thank you my lord,” Peter rasped out as he held out his bloodied stump.

“Your other hand!” Voldemort snapped. Peter looked at him, confused before he lifted his other hand and Voldemort pressed the tip of his wand to the dark mark, causing it to go pure black.

“Oh hell – more people to the party,” Harry muttered as he rolled his eyes in annoyance. Voldemort just turned dark red eyes toward him.

“Harry Potter,” Voldemort spat out and got a glare in return.

“Voldie – not looking very good are you?” Harry asked sarcastically and got a growl in return before he turned to look at Wormtail once more and held out his hand for Wormtail’s bloodied stump.

Wormtail handed him his stump and Voldemort waved a wand. A hand grew out from the stump but it wasn’t was a normal looking hand, no, it was a hand made out of pure silver and Harry couldn’t help but feel his stomach clench at the thought of Remus Lupin being in danger from Wormtail.

Figures appeared blurry from the apparating, surrounding themselves around Voldemort, who turned around in a circle to face his loyal followers only to snarl.

“13 years I have lingered about on this plane. 13 years I have waited for someone to come forward and brought me back. Only one person came forward and managed to bring me back and not all of you are here!” Voldemort snarled at them before waving his hand, divesting the death eaters of their masks and exposing them to Harry.

“I know that my most loyal followers are in Azkaban, serving their time for following me. One person has fled from the nest – I wouldn't worry about him as he will be dealt with,” Voldemort informed them and Harry knew that he was talking about Igor. “One of my followers – my most loyal follower is hidden safely in a place, awaiting for my word that I have return – when he finally arrives, he will be rewarded remarkably well but for the rest of you...I should curse you to hell!” Voldemort snarled at them.

“Master...” Lucius started as he bowed down. “We have searched long and hard for a way to bring you back...”

“Lucius – spare me of your tears,” Voldemort snapped before he turned to Harry. “I have a more...pressing problem to deal with.”

“Not really my problem is it?” Harry remarked before smirking. “Any one would say that you are scared of me.”

“Voldemort glared at Harry that usually had his followers cowering in fear but it only served Harry's amusement.

“Mia and Hermione are scarier than you,” Harry informed him. “I get those glares on a daily basis.”

“Shut up Potter – I'm the boss here tonight,” Voldemort informed him before he flicked his wand and Harry fell to the ground with a thud as he was released from the trap.

Shaking his head, Harry stood up and brushed the dirt and grass off his clothes before he looked at Voldemort, who was still holding his wand, trained on Harry.

“And just what are you going to do?” Harry remarked only to bring up his hand as a yellow curse was shot his way and smirked at Voldemort as his green eyes flared up with fire.

“You are going to die Potter and that mudblood of yours too – but not before my death eaters have fun with her,” Voldemort promised.

“You gotta get past me and Mia first,” Harry informed him before smirking. “And if I don’t kill you – you can bet that Mia will dismantle you.”

“She is nothing but a pain in the ass,” Lucius remarked. “I’ll easily strike her down and have my fun with both of them – they would be a fabulous addition to the whores.”

“Mia?” Voldemort asked, curiously.

“Callie and Sirius Black’s daughter,” Lucius spoke up and Voldemort nodded as Callie came back to him.

“Yeah – I remember her. She was remarkable standing up to me,” Voldemort stated before he looked at Harry. “Before I finally took her life from her.”

“Mia is a replicate of Aunt Callie – except she has black hair and has been trained to kill your kind,” Harry said.

“Seems like she’ll be a fabulous addition to my death eaters,” Voldemort stated before he looked at Harry once more. “I ask you again, will you join me and help me to rule the world?”

“For every man who wants to rule the world – there’s a man who just wants to be free,” Harry remarked to Voldemort. “I’ll take the freedom route.”

The smile slipped from Voldemort’s face as he turned to face Harry fully before he lifted his wand.

“Then you shall die,” Voldemort snarled before waving his wand and a red light shot out toward Harry, causing him to duck off to the side

before flinging a spell back at Voldemort, who waved his wand, creating a shield to reflect the spell.

Harry raised his wand once more and the red light shot out and hit Voldemort squarely on the chest, sending him flying backward.

The Death Eaters gasped as they watched as a fourteen year old boy send their feared leader flying.

“Don’t know why you are so shocked,” Harry taunted. “I did kick his ass off this plane before.”

Voldemort rose back up to his feet, his red eyes flashing angrily as he raised his wand and sent a dark blue spell which hit Harry across the chest and enveloped him in a bright blue light. Harry let out a scream as wracking pain filled his veins. It was like the crucio spell but a thousand times worse.

Voldemort laughed, causing his death eaters to laugh but Wormtail trailed off as he watched Harry with fear in his eyes.

Voldemort felt the air getting cooler and his laughers slowly died down as he looked toward Harry and watched in morbid fascination as Harry brought down the sword and his green eyes came into view.

Harry summoned the sword using his elemental abilities and it helped him to deflect the spell, breaking the torture.

The death eaters couldn’t help the fear that started to rise in their blood at the sight of Harry Potter. The sight of the flames burning in Harry’s eyes weren’t the sight that had them shaking in fear.

It was the sight of his twisted evil smirk that adored his face – one they had never seen before.

“Face it Voldemort – you don’t know what you are messing with,” Harry informed Voldemort.

“How...” Voldemort whispered and got a furthered twisted grin.

“I’m the boy who lived,” Harry stated, enraging Voldemort once more.

“Avada Kavara!” Voldemort shouted as he swung his wand toward Harry and a green light shot out.

“Reducto!” Harry shouted back as the red light shot out and both light merged in the middle. A large gold transparent dome appeared and surrounded Harry and Voldemort as the wands created a gold link that had the wands vibrating under their hands.

The Death Eaters were whispering together, confused and worried about what was happening.

“Master...what should we do?” Lucius called out.

“Nothing! Do nothing! Potter is mine to deal with!” Voldemort shouted as he kept his red eyes locked on Harry.

Soon, the middle of the link started to grew brighter as Voldemort and Harry’s wands battled to come out on tope till the majority of the spell hit Voldemort’s wands, releasing the shadows of his victims. A smoky form stepped through. Harry felt his breath caught when he recognised that it was Cedric.

Cedric nodded before he moved to the side and another man stepped through.

“You hold on tight – you hear me boy?” The male demanded. Harry nodded his understanding when a female stepped out this time but Harry didn’t recognise her until he remembered about a female going missing over the summer.

“He’s evil – just hold on, we’re nearly there,” she told Harry, who nodded again.

Harry turned back to the link only to for his breath to get caught in his throat when he saw Mia step out of the glaring light only to realise that Mia didn’t have blonde hair.

“Aunt Callie?” Harry whispered, hoarsely. She looked like Mia except with wavy blonde hair. She smiled at him as she moved closer to him.

"Its okay sweetie, just hold on a little bit longer," Callie soothed him and Harry nodded as Callie moved closer to him.

Harry turned back to the link only to see an older version of himself with brown eyes.

"Dad?" Harry asked and James smiled.

"Just a little bit longer son – your mother wants to see you," James whispered to his son as he moved closer and Harry looked back to the linked wands once more and felt his heart stop when his mother came out.

"Mum," Harry whispered, his voice thick with unshed tears. Lily smiled sadly at her son.

"It's okay honey eyes, I'm here," Lily promised as she kissed his forehead. Harry closed his eyes, wanting to feel her lips on his forehead but was disappointed when it never came.

"Harry..." James said and Harry turned to face his father. "When I say go, I want you to break the link and run back to the cup as fast as you can. You need to let everyone know that Voldemort is back." Harry nodded in understanding.

"Harry..." Cedric called out and Harry turned to face him. "Can you take my body back to my parents so they can bury me and tell them that I love them?" Harry nodded.

"Harry," Harry turned to look at his parents. "We are so proud of you – you have grown up so much and we're just sorry that we weren't there with you but Sirius has grown you the way we wanted him to – can you tell him thank you?" James asked and Harry nodded as tears filled his eyes.

"We love you so much honey eyes," Lily whispered as she touched the side of her son's face, stroking her thumb over his cheek. The name Honey eyes came from when Harry was born – he wasn't born with normal baby blue eyes but brown eyes that looked liked honey to his parents but it slowly changed to its current green colour.

“Harry,” Cedric called out once more and Harry looked at him. “Can you tell Mia that I’m sorry and that I understand?” Harry looked at him, confused but he nodded.

“Sure. Should I say why?” Harry asked but Cedric shook his head.

“No, she’ll understand,” Cedric, told him, sadly.

“Are you ready sweetheart?” Lily asked and Harry nodded but stopped when he felt a hand on his shoulder and he turned to see his Aunt Callie standing next to him. She reached over and kissed his forehead.

“Tell Sirius and Mia I love them so much and tell Mia that it’s okay to be scared but she doesn’t need to run,” Callie told him and Harry nodded.

“I love you guys,” Harry whispered and James patted his son’s back.

“And we love you too,” he promised. “Get ready.”

Harry straightened his back and gripped his wand tightly as he waited for the command to break the link.

“GO!” James shouted and Harry thrust his wand up into the air as hard as he could, breaking the link and dropping the dome. The spirits of Voldemort’s victims lingered as Harry ran toward where Cedric’s body had fallen from the killing curse.

“NO!” Voldemort shouted. “STOP HIM!” Red lights shot over to Harry just before he ducked down and rolled over to Cedric’s body before he lifted his wand.

“Accio Portkey!” Harry shouted and the cup shot over to Harry’s hand and they both disappeared, leaving Voldemort screaming his name in rage.

TBC

Chapter 19: Returns, Moody Uncovers and Warnings.

“HARRY!” Hermione screamed as Harry fell to the ground in front of the maze with a thump.

Harry lifted his head up and Hermione’s worried brown eyes met and held Harry’s blurry, desolated look, one that had Hermione wondering what happened when Harry had disappeared. Her eyes travelled to the body underneath Harry and frowned softly when she saw that Cedric wasn’t moving.

Hermione grunted as she was shoved to the side, causing Mia to reach out and grab her best friend before she fell completely to the ground.

“Are you okay?” Mia asked, worried and got a nod from Hermione before Mia turned her dark eyes and saw that everyone was beginning to crowd Harry. Mia could see that Harry was now looking around desperately for Hermione and he frowned as the volume of the voices increased in a way that Mia knew that it was getting to him.

“Would you all SHUT UP!” Mia roared, causing everyone to look at her. She moved closer toward where Harry was lying. “Harry...” she whispered and Harry shook his head.

“He’s back, Voldemort’s back!” he said hoarsely and Hermione covered her mouth with her hand.

“Oh God, Cedric...” McGonagall said as understanding dawned on her.

Mr. Diggory ran forward and shoved Harry off his son before he lifted Cedric’s head and started shaking his body to try and wake Cedric, despite the futility.

“I tried to get us back out in time but it was too late – he died Harry told Mr Diggory desperately “Voldemort came back!”

“Harry!” Hermione cried out as she pushed her way through everyone before she finally reached Harry’s side and knelt down next to him and Harry turned to face her.

“Voldemort’s back,” he whispered as the chill started to take over his body, numbing him to any emotions.

Hermione just wrapped her arms around Harry’s body, holding him close as she turned her dark eyes up to Mia, who nodded and slinked off through the crowds so she could grab Draco and get him up to speed.

Hermione found herself in between Mr Diggory and Harry as Amos tried to grab Harry to shake answers from the younger male over what had happened to his son.

“What happened?” Mr Diggory screamed at Harry.

“Voldemort had him killed! We tried to get out but it was too late!” Harry shouted back.

“Don’t lie to me boy!” Mr Diggory roared as he shook Harry harder. “He-who-must-not-be-named is not alive! He can’t have ordered Cedric’s death!”

“It’s true!” Harry protested but it was fruitless, Mr Diggory was determined not to listen to him.

“Get off him!” Hermione shouted as she used all her strength and pushed Mr. Diggory away, causing him to fall backward onto his butt. “Harry didn’t kill Cedric – did you not see the devastated look on his face – Voldemort is back – the same person who killed his parents is back and your behaviour isn’t making the situation any better!”

While she was berating the older man, a man limped closer to Harry and slipped an arm around Harry’s waist, startling the younger man.

“Come on lad,” a gruff male voice whispered and Harry turned to see Moody helping him up. “We need to get you to the hospital wing,” Moody whispered. Harry, dazedly, felt himself being pulled up and walked away from the scene in front of the maze and following Moody wherever Moody was leading him too.

However, his disappearance was noticed almost immediately by his girlfriend.

“Harry?” Hermione asked, looking around with a hint of blue showing up in her eyes.

“Miss Granger, where is Mr. Potter?” McGonagall asked and Hermione shook her head as she turned to face the concerned Professor.

“The last time I saw him, he was standing next to Professor Moody,” Hermione told her and felt a warm tingle in her jean pocket. Thrusting her hand into her pocket, she pulled out a note that had appeared magically and opened it.

She felt the blood draining from her face as she read Draco Malfoy’s words about who Professor Moody truly was and dashed off to the castle with Professor McGonagall following her closely.

“I don’t get it – how on earth did Crouch get past Dumbledore?” Mia raged to Draco. Both of them were in an unused classroom.

Dobby had shown up and informed them of Winky’s confession. Winky had been upset even more than usual that she had Sirius worried and he had ordered Dobby to find out why Winky was upset.

Dobby showed up at the school in a fit of panic and had used his old bonding to the Malfoy line and had found Draco with Mia and explained that Barty Crouch Junior hadn’t died in jail like everyone had assumed and that he had taken over Moody’s position in order to get close to Harry.

Mia soothed the young house elf while watching Draco write out a quick note. Draco pointed his wand and muttered a spell under his breath and both watched as the note disappeared with a small red flash before he turned to face Mia with a worried expression on his face.

“Hogwarts isn’t very safe if Harry is in danger every year,” Draco muttered as he rested back on his hands from where he was sitting on the table, watching Mia pace the floor in front of him.

He just got a glance of agreement in return and both of them just stayed silent.

Hermione rushed up to Moody's office only to see Snape and Dumbledore already standing outside the door. Snape was trying to blast the door open but was having no luck as the door kept absorbing the magic. Dumbledore had tried but nothing had worked and allowed Snape a chance as he was an uncovered death eater when Hermione's temper finally exploded.

"Move out of my way!" Hermione snapped as she pushed Snape aside. She turned to her side and snapped her leg and kicked the door as hard as she could, causing the door to break off from its hinges and fall to the floor.

Moody and Harry's heads snapped up and saw Hermione standing there with her wand out and she fired off a spell that stunned Moody. Harry took advantage of the situation and kicked Moody's wand of his hand and it went flying through the air before he kicked Moody in the stomach, causing him to fly backward till his back hit the wall and he slid down. Hermione fired off another spell, one that had Moody slipping unconscious.

"Harry!" Hermione whispered as she pushed past the furniture that had been tossed about during the fight between Moody and Harry and hurried over to him. She helped him up, draping one arm over her shoulder, holding him up.

Harry winced as one of his hand rested over his sore spot on his rib as he leaned into his girlfriend.

They watched as Moody changed form of a younger man who had black hair and dark empty brown eyes as he slowly woke up before he laughed manically at the situation.

"Barty Crouch Junior!" Snape and Dumbledore exclaimed together, shocked at what they were seeing. But Harry knew him from somewhere else.

"That's him!" Harry shouted. "That's the man from my dreams and from the camp!" Harry exclaimed.

"What are you talking about?" Hermione asked, confused. Harry turned to face her.

"I had a weird dream before we went to the Quidditch Match at the summer – he was in it and he was the reason why I stopped running toward the portkey site – he was just standing to the side with an evil grin on his face," Harry told her.

"He's working with Voldemort," Hermione whispered as she turned to face the impostor only to see Snape forcing clear liquid down his throat and knew it was the strongest truth potion they had on hand.

She watched as Dumbledore questioned Barty Crouch Junior while she still held onto Harry the whole time. She couldn't believe that this impostor had managed to slip past everyone and set up everything that Harry had went through.

Hermione turned her head in disgust that she almost lost her boyfriend thanks to one of Voldemort's lackey when she felt Harry getting heavy and worried eyes shot up to Harry's face.

"Harry..." she called out, attracting everyone's attention to them.

Harry lifted a hand up to his head as he started to feel light weight and dizzy before coloured spots started dancing around his eyes and his eyes rolled up into the back of his head and was vaguely aware of Hermione calling his name as the darkness gave him reprieve from his day.

Harry found himself in the hospital wing, looking up at the ceiling. Frowning as he turned his head only to see a blurry hand moving toward him and soon everything was clear as Hermione placed his glasses on for him.

"You fainted due to blood loss," Hermione said, answering his unanswered question and Harry nodded in understanding as she helped him sit up slowly, minding the fact that he could get dizzy.

There was a sudden slam and everyone spun their head around to see Remus holding a glass jar on the windowsill. Hermione was the only one who seemed to understand what was going on before she turned everyone's attention back to Harry.

"What happened, Harry?" she whispered.

"I saw them," Harry whispered, causing everyone to look confused to what Harry was talking about.

"What was that dear?" Molly asked and Harry looked up.

"I saw my parents and Aunt Callie," he explained and the blood drains from Sirius' face. Ron stared at Harry, dumbstruck while tears began to fill Mia's eyes. Hermione shifted closer and ran a hand through his hair.

"How?" Molly asked and Harry sighed.

"Voldemort threw the killing curse at me, I threw the reducto curse and our spells met in midair then formed this gold link between our wands," Harry explained. "The shadows of his victims came out, Bertha Jorkins, the old man and Cedric. He came out and asked me to take his body back to his parents, and then Aunt Callie came out. At first I thought it was Mia but she had blonde hair, she told me that everything was going to be fine," Harry whispered, his voice cracking a bit. "Then my dad came out and told me to hold on and my mom came out. They told me that they were there to help me and told me when to break the link," he explained.

Hermione shifted her body and wrapped her arms around Harry's shoulders, bringing him into a hug as he wrapped his arms around her waist, holding on as he buried his face into her neck.

"They saved your life," Remus told him and Harry nodded.

"And," Harry spoke up and they looked toward him. "They gave me a couple of messages."

"Harry?" Remus asked, concerned.

"Uncle Sirius, Mia – Aunt Callie says she loves you and Mia, she said that it's okay to be scared but you don't need to run," Harry told them before he took a deep breath as he looked at Mia. "And Cedric says that he's sorry and he understands."

He inhaled sharply when he saw the understanding dawning on Mia's eyes before her heart visible shattered in her eyes. Mia closed her

eyes, holding back the tears before she nodded and opened her eyes and looked at Harry.

"Thank you," she whispered before she stood up and left the hospital wing.

"What was that about?" Ron asked, concerned and confused but no one had any answers, except Hermione, who just watched her best friend go with an aching heart.

Mia ran out of the castle and into the pouring rain. One hand covering her mouth while the other one covered her stomach.

She stumbled over to the lake before she knelt down beside it and cried. All she could feel with disgust at herself for using Cedric. She should have told him the truth before he died but she was so scared of everything that was happening she just latched onto something that was easy.

Her brother was almost taken from her. Her heart couldn't cope with the pain. She almost lost another person she loved thanks to Voldemort and she hated it. She hated the feeling weak and useless.

She knew that she wasn't a superhuman, she was only a normal human being whose big brother was now at the front line when it came to war and there was a chance she would lose him.

Mia couldn't help but sob harder. Voldemort was back. The man who took away her mother. The man who fulfilled the prophecy and marked Harry as his equal. The man who meant Harry's death if he was ever to win.

She couldn't lose her brother; she couldn't let Hermione lose the one man she loved. She knew that if Harry was to die, Hermione would die right beside him and it scared Mia that she would lose two people that she loved.

"Damn you Voldemort, why can't you just stay dead?" Mia whispered angrily before another round of tears poured out of her.

Lightening and thunder fill the sky, startling the students around Hunter before it set them back into their sombre mood – even mother nature knew today wasn't a good day.

Hunter looked out of the window only for his eyes to narrow when he saw a figure kneeling down beside the lake. The lightening flashed and the figure came into view.

Hunter's eyes widen before he rushed out of the library and out of the castle.

"Mia!" Hunter shouted over the roaring wind as he moved closer to Mia. He knelt down beside her and tried to pull her into a hug only to feel her shoving him away.

"Leave me alone!" Mia shouted as she looked at him. "Voldemort is back! He wants to take Harry!" she broke down in tears once more.

"Mia..." Hunter whispered before he pulled her into a hug once more and she fell into his arms, willing, as she clutched his jumper and sobbed into his chest. Hunter just ran his hand over her hair, rocking her back and forth as he tried to comfort the girl.

"He killed Cedric!" Mia cried. "He tried to kill Harry!"

"It's gonna be okay," Hunter soothed pathetically. He knew that it wasn't going to be okay but what do you say at a time like this? Where someone had died and where someone had almost died? That someone who was dead had come back to life?

"I hate him!" Mia sobbed. "I hate him so much!" Hunter just nodded as he held her close.

Draco was pacing the unused classroom as rage and sadness raced through his veins. He couldn't help the burst of rage he felt as he grabbed a chair and threw it across the room, watching it shatter to pieces, but it didn't make him feel better.

He hated Voldemort. He wanted Voldemort dead and the strength of his rage scared him death. He was terrified that Voldemort was back, he knew that his father would assign him to Voldemort's side and he

didn't want any more deaths to happen – not at Voldemort's hands. Voldemort was back. He was back to kill Harry and take over the world and Draco felt helpless.

His father would be boasting of it tonight, by sending him a letter, that his master has finally came back and how they had gotten rid of Cedric like it was a game, but it wasn't a game to Draco – no, it was war and he knew that it was going to be a bloodbath soon.

"Draco?" a female voice asked and Draco turned to see Lisa Turpin standing there in the doorway, her green eyes dark with concern.

Draco just slumped to the ground before he finally let loose his tears and sobbed. Lisa just gasped as she hurried into the room, closed the door behind her and hurried over to Draco and pulled him into a hug.

"He almost killed Harry. He's back!" Draco sobbed. Lisa pulled away, confused.

"Draco – what's going on?" Lisa asked and the whole truth came tumbling out. How he was working with Harry, Hermione and Mia behind the scenes of finding out what was going on. How he was in training with the trio and how he was undercover.

Lisa just watched him shocked. She knew that Draco was different from his father but she hadn't realised how different and felt herself falling for him even more than she had fallen before.

"Voldemort's back," Draco finished off in a hoarse whisper. "Harry is on the front line to be killed." Draco couldn't help the tears that welled up again and Lisa just wrapped her arms around him once more, comforting him.

"With you, Mia and Hermione helping him – Harry will make it," Lisa whispered and got a nod in return as they both just sat there in silence.

Ron was walking through the hallway, lost in his thoughts when he felt a hand on his shoulder and turned to see Luna standing there, gazing up at him with blue eyes soft in understanding.

Ron felt his wall crumble and tears started to fill his eyes. Luna just stepped forward and enveloped him in her arms as she comforted him.

“Voldemort is going down – Harry will survive the war,” Luna whispered into his ear and Ron nodded hopefully as he just tightened his grip around Luna’s waist, holding onto her as she comforted him.

Harry was staring off in space while Hermione stroked the back of his hand with her thumb when Harry finally spoke, allowing it to sink in.

“I saw my parents,” Harry whispered as tears began to fill his eyes. Hermione felt her heart break at the desolated look on Harry’s face before she moved in closer and wrapped her arms around his body. “They told me they loved me and that they were proud of me,” Harry sobbed into Hermione’s neck as he clung to her. Hermione kissed the side of Harry’s head as she held him close to him.

Tears slipped from her closed eyes, she wished more than anything to be able to have the power to bring back the dead.

Soon, Harry sobs died down, just sniffled every now and then. Hermione pulled away and cupped his face before she leaned in and rested her forehead against his.

“It was impossible for them to not to love you or be proud of you – you are their son Harry, you’re becoming the man they always hoped you would become,” Hermione told him as tears filled her eyes before she leaned in and softly kissed his lips before kissing his cheek and enveloped him in a hug once more.

Harry just clung to Hermione, holding onto the one thing that brought him back to Hogwarts, safe and alive.

Mia stepped into the common room, soaking wet. Her black hair was plastered to her head while her eyes were bloodshot and empty.

Everyone just looked at her, shocked at seeing their kick ass Mia Black looking so empty. Hermione came down into the common room only to stop short when she saw her best friend and her eyes softened.

“Oh sweetie,” Hermione whispered as she moved closer and enveloped Mia into a hug before she led up her up the stairs.

They reached the bedroom and Mia stripped her wet clothes off while Hermione grabbed a bathrobe and slipped it onto Mia before leading her over to the bed.

Mia just lay down on the bed and curled up on it, allowing Hermione to slip in behind her and hold her best friend.

“What happened?” Hermione whispered. She had seen the change in Cedric and Mia when they arrived at the tent and she had a feeling of what had happened but she needed to hear it.

“He asked me to be his girlfriend,” Mia whispered. “We were going to talk after he finished the last task.” She broke down crying and Hermione just closed her eyes as a few tears slipped out from the corner of her eyes as she held Mia close to her.

“It’ll be okay Mia, you’ll see,” Hermione whispered, teary and Mia nodded as they both just laid there.

But both of them knew that it would get worse before it would get better.

Two hours later, everyone found themselves in the Hospital wing. They had all been kicked out of the hospital wing earlier so Madam Pomfrey check over Harry again and heal his wounds.

Dumbledore was currently pacing the floor in front of Harry’s bed as he tried to think up a way in order to get Harry to go to the Dursleys where he would be safe from Voldemort and the Death Eaters.

“I think Harry should go to the Dursleys,” Dumbledore stated only to be faced with a dangerous sight as Sirius, Mia and Hermione all stood up, surrounding Harry.

“Don’t you even think about it Dumbledore, Harry is going nowhere,” Sirius warned him. “He needs to be around people who love him, not sadistic animals who don’t even care about him.”

“Beside, do it and you’ll drive Harry away,” Mia stated. Dumbledore turned to Hermione.

“Miss Granger, it’s for his own good, he’ll be protected there!” Dumbledore pleaded, trying to get to Hermione’s good nature and got a cold glare in return.

“Harry is going nowhere near those people as long I’m alive,” she warned him.

“Albus!” McGonagall scolded. “Leave them alone, Harry has been through a traumatic experience, the last thing he needs is to be belittled and abused. she informed him with a glare.

Dumbledore was about to argue when the hospital doors opened once more and everyone turned to see Fudge stepping through the door..

“What happened, I want answers now!” Fudge snapped.

“Voldemort is alive,” Dumbledore informed Fudge only to be met with disbelief “What have you been taking?” Fudge demanded. “You-Know-Who is dead and has been for the last 13 years.”

“I was there,” Harry spoke up, drawing Fudge’s attention to him. “Voldemort is back and alive.”

“Don’t be ridiculous!” Fudge snapped. “It is impossible!” Harry lost control over his temper.

“I fought him!” Harry shouted as he got out of bed, despite Madam Pomfrey’s warnings. “I gained this scar because of him!” Harry thrust out his scarred arm where the knife had cut deeply into the skin – one that wouldn’t heal properly no matter what Fawkes or Madam Pomfrey did.

“You have been telling outrageous lies!” Fudge shouted.

“Voldemort is back! If you want to continue to bury your head in the sand – then you are fucking welcome to but don’t expect me to save your ass when Voldemort finally shows himself, because you deserve

the death he will give you!” Harry roared as the fire flamed up in Harry’s eyes, causing all the flames near by Harry to rise even higher, startling everyone in the hospital wing.

“Voldemort is back,” Hermione spoke up as she placed a hand on Harry’s shoulder, calming him down slightly before she looked at Fudge with hard eyes. “You are making a mistake of not telling anyone – they could prepare themselves for any danger yet you are refusing to give them their chance.”

“They are not in any danger because He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named is not alive!” Fudge shouted.

Everyone but Harry ducked to escape the shards as the lanterns blew up under the heat of the fire.

Fudge just looked at the now broken lanterns before he looked at Harry.

“How are we supposed to take your word that He Who Must Not Be Named is alive – you could have killed Cedric and passed the blame onto a dead man,” Fudge stated, coyly. He now had Harry in a trap and he wasn’t going to let the Boy-Who-Lived go.

“Don’t push me beyond my limit,” Harry snapped back, startling the minister. “You really don’t want to see what I’m like when I’m pissed off.”

“Beside – Cedric and Harry’s wand came back with them – if Harry really killed Cedric – you can cast a spell on the wand to reveal the last spell that was used on both wands,” Hermione informed the minister with a hard glint in her eyes.

“Mr Potter – get back in your bed!” Madam Pomfrey shouted from where she was standing in her doorway. She made her way over to her patient and forced him back into his bed before she spun on her heels and gave the minister a hard glare. The minister quailed under it. “And I’d thank you to stop upsetting my patients!”

“You need to get his head checked out,” Fudge informed the Matron. “He’s obviously losing his mind.”

“Do I tell you to do your job?” Madam Pomfrey asked, calmly. One that had Mia’s eyes widening in panic before she got off the bed and hurried behind Hermione, who ducked behind Remus.

“No,” Fudge said clueless.

“Then don’t tell me how to do my JOB!” Madam Pomfrey informed Fudge with an evil glare. “And for your information – Mr. Potter’s state of mind is absolutely fine – it’s his stress levels I’m worried about with you storming in here and making all sorts of accusations!”

“He’s claiming that You-Know-Who is alive!” Fudge shouted and Madam Pomfrey raised an eyebrow.

“We all knew that he wasn’t going to stay dead for a long time – Evil never does,” Madam Pomfrey informed the Minister before she made shooing motions. “Now – get OUT of MY hospital wing!”

Fudge straightened up before he shot Harry a glare before looking at Hermione and Mia, who were now standing next to Remus Lupin – the werewolf.

“Congratulations Mr Potter, you won the triwizarding championship,” Fudge informed the young man before dropping the bag of money on the small bedside table. “Here’s your prize money.”

He didn’t see Mia holding Hermione back as Hermione made to launch herself at the minister so she could kick his ass for mistreating her boyfriend.

“Don’t want it,” Harry replied as he thrust the money back at Fudge. “I don’t do well with blood money.” Fudge just glared Harry before placing the money back on the table.

“You won – you keep it,” Fudge informed him before he bowed his head and made to walk out of the Hospital wing when Mia’s voice spoke up.

“I’m warning you, Fudge,” Mia stated from where she was still holding Hermione back. “Tell the Wizarding world that Voldemort isn’t alive, it will be your head that will be handed to him.”

“He isn’t alive!” Fudge exclaimed and Mia shook her head.

“Fine, have a nice life, I can assure you that you won’t be living much longer,” she informed him before snapping her fingers, causing Fudge to go flying out of the hospital wing. His back was slammed into the wall before the doors were shut in his face, betraying his shocked expression at what just happened.

“Mia...” Harry started, tiredly and got a glare in return, causing him to shut up. “Nothing,” he muttered under his breath before he eyed his sister and girlfriend. “And why are you holding onto Hermione?”

“Because she was about ready to kill the Minister – I’m not visiting anyone in jail,” Mia informed Harry as she let Hermione go only to wrap her arms around Hermione’s waist once more as Hermione made a dash for the doors.

“I’m going to kill him – let me go!” Hermione raged but Mia shook her head.

“No way – you can wait till Voldemort reveals himself then kill Fudge – we can blame it on the death eaters this way,” Mia informed Hermione.

“MIA!” Molly, Remus, Sirius and Professor McGonagall scolded together. Mia just shook her head before she let go Hermione go only to roll her eyes as she had to wrap her arms around Hermione’s waist once more before she glare at her brother.

“You – control her!” Mia informed Harry.

Harry got out of bed once more and stepped in front of Hermione before sliding a hand into her hair and pressed a hard kiss to Hermione’s lips.

Mia let Hermione go and took a step back before rolling her eyes toward Ron, who turned his head away to stifle a snicker.

Hermione let out a soft groan as she wrapped her arms around Harry’s shoulders, holding him close, revelling in the fact that he was still alive and holding her despite the brush with Voldemort.

Sirius just sighed as he rubbed his forehead while Remus looked at Sirius with a tender smile – one that had Sirius returned as they remembered a certain couple who used to do this.

Molly stared at Harry and Hermione with a disgusted look on her face while Ginny looked away as hurt filled her veins before she left the hospital wing all together.

Professor Dumbledore cleared his throat only to gain a backhanded slap from Professor McGonagall and looked down to see her glaring at him.

“Don’t you dare interrupt them – Harry has been through a terrible ordeal and only Hermione will be able to help him get past it – Merlin forbid you to even get on my bad side,” she warned him in a cool tone, one that had Dumbledore stepping back slightly.

Everyone just turned back to see Hermione was helping Harry back into bed and tucked the covers over him before sitting on the bed and taking his hand.

Madam Pomfrey came back out with a goblet in her hand before she glared at the visitors.

“It is time for Mr Potter to go to sleep – no visitors!” she informed them and everyone nodded except from Hermione and Ron.

Everyone left the Hospital wing. Dumbledore and McGonagall went down the hallway to check on the other students while Remus walked off with the Weasley family.

Mia just stopped in place and Sirius turned to look at his daughter, wondering what she wanted only to see tears filling her eyes.

“Mia?” Sirius asked, curious.

“Can you just hold me?” Mia asked in a little girl’s voice. Sirius looked down at his daughter in a stunned shock at her tone before his eyes softened when he saw his baby girl again. He held out his arms and Mia rushed into them, holding onto her dad and allowed herself to cry into his chest.

“Everything will be okay, baby girl, you’ll see,” Sirius whispered as he buried his face into his daughter’s hair, comforting her.

Mia just nodded as she clung to her father tightly as she inhaled the scent that made him her father and closed her eyes, allowing him to sooth her pain in the only way a father knew how to.

Ron and Hermione were sitting on an empty bed just to the right of Harry’s bed. Both of them hadn’t wanted to leave Harry alone for the time being.

“Will Harry be alright?” Ron asked as he looked toward Hermione. Hermione sighed as she looked at Ron before looking at Harry, who was sleeping in bed.

“In time – yeah,” Hermione whispered. Ron just reached out and wrapped an arm around Hermione’s shoulders and hugged her as she watched her boyfriend sleep.

TBC

Chapter 20: Mourning and the Home Ride.

Everyone found themselves in the Great Hall for the end of term feast, but this time, there weren't any colourful banners signalling who had won the house cup. There were no students taking excitedly about going home for the summer, making plans to meet up over the summer.

The banners that were hanging were black. The students were either looking straight ahead or at their shoes. Some of the students were crying while the others were either comforting the crying students or just staring into space.

Hermione leaned over and rested her head on Harry's shoulder. Harry leaned his head over and rested it on her head, holding her close to him. Mia stared stonily ahead of her while Ron looked down at the ground, unable to deal with the emotions that were mixing inside of him.

Dumbledore stood up at the Head Table, where all the teachers were dressed in black.

"Today we won't be celebrating," Dumbledore started. "No, today we are mourning the death of an amazing young man who we've all come to know. Cedric Diggory was a remarkable young man. He had shown strength and loyalty toward his house and friends. While death is a new adventure, he was taken away from us at a young age and we will never understand why he had to be taken away from us." Dumbledore stopped and scanned his eyes over his students. "The Ministry doesn't want me to tell you this because they think it will cause a panic but, I feel it's my duty as your headmaster to tell you, that Cedric was killed...by Voldemort."

There were hushed whispers going around the Great Hall. "Voldemort was alive?"

"Voldemort has managed to resurrect himself, and in the process, Cedric died. The Ministry refuses to believe that Voldemort is back but I'm telling you right now and right here, Voldemort is back and I want you all to be extra cautious from now on," Dumbledore warned them. "Just because it looks safe – it never means that it is safe."

Dumbledore sat down and turned to speak to Snape, who nodded in agreement with something Dumbledore told him.

“Let’s go for a walk,” Harry told Hermione, who nodded in return and they both stood up, leaving the Great Hall.

Just as they left, they were interrupted.

“Harry,” a male voice called out and Harry turned only for Hermione to grip his hand tightly when they both spotted Amos Diggory making his way over to them with a woman, who Harry assumed was Cedric’s mother.

“Yes,” Harry asked. Hermione just kept her mouth shut as she glared at Mr. Diggory, while she understood that Mr. Diggory was grieving over his son, it gave him no right to assault Harry.

“We heard about you refusing the money,” Mr. Diggory told him. “We want you to take it – Cedric would have wanted that.”

“Mr. Diggory – money means nothing to me,” Harry told him. “The only reason Cedric is dead is because no one bothered to make sure that everyone was who they said they were – all this could have been prevented if people actually took measures in making sure everything was safe.”

Hermione just looked up at Harry before resting her chin on Harry’s shoulder as she looked at the parents once more.

“Please,” the woman whispered and Harry looked at her. “My son died – we want you to take the money – it’s what Cedric would have wanted.” Harry just stared at her for a long moment before he gave a short nod.

“I’ll find something to give the money to – for what it’s worth, Cedric said he loved you before he died,” Harry told them and the woman let out a soft sob as she gave Harry a soft look.

“Thank you,” she whispered and Harry nodded as he watched Mr. Diggory wrap his wife up in his arms as they both walked away from

Hogwarts with the knowledge that their son loved them and that he was dead.

“Are you okay?” Hermione’s soft voice called him back and Harry looked down at her before smiling softly and brushed a soft kiss across her forehead.

“Yeah,” Harry told him and they both walked out of Hogwarts and onto the grounds where they could escape the world for a short moment.

Harry was sitting at the base of the tree next to the lake. Hermione was sitting in between his spread legs with her back resting against his chest and her head on his shoulder. Harry had wrapped his arms around her waist.

Ron was sitting on a boulder as he looked out toward the lake while Mia was lying down at the bank of the lake and trailing her fingers through the water aimlessly.

All four of them were lost in their thoughts.

“Do you think we could ever have a quiet year at Hogwarts?” Ron asked and Hermione snorted.

“No,” she told them and Ron smirked.

“What is a year without a few dragons?” he asked and Mia rolled her eyes.

“Oh yes, dragons, three-headed dogs, giant spiders, basilisk, werewolves, a mass murderer ‘supposedly’ on the loose, merpeople,” Mia listed off before she changed the topic. “By the way, have you noticed a trend when it comes to the DADA teachers? One teacher was possessed, another was a fraud, one was a werewolf and we just had an impostor – what’s next?”

“Vampires?” Harry suggested and Mia wrinkled her nose.

“I hope not, beside – vampires don’t really like school that much,” Mia told them.

“Beside – after all the mail Dumbledore got about Remus – he won’t risk angering the parents too much,” Hermione agreed.

“What are we going to do?” Ron asked after a few moments of silence.

“We’re gonna go home and meet up again in the middle of the summer,” Harry told them and everyone turned to look at Harry but he was staring out at the lake. “We’re going to train even harder to stop Voldemort and his minions.”

“Ron,” Hermione started and Ron looked at her. “You need to join us in training – because Voldemort knows you’re our friend, you need to be trained.”

“Okay,” Ron whispered with a gentle nod, understanding what Hermione was getting at.

Mia rolled onto her back and looked up at the sky before she sat up and raised her knees and wrapped her arms around her knees, hugging them.

“Do you think we can get through this war unscathed?” Mia whispered, asking the only question that was burning in her mind. Harry looked at Mia. “Do you think we’ll make it out of the war alive?”

“We have to,” Hermione whispered as she looked at her best friend. “Because I’m not going on with my life if none of you are here.”

“Where ever one of us goes – the others follow,” Ron said and gained a small smile from Harry.

“Yeah,” Harry agreed and all of them looked toward the lake once more, lost in their thoughts.

Harry and Hermione strolled through Hogwarts hallway till they reached a classroom. Harry looked around before he opened the door and ushered Hermione through and stepped through himself before shutting the door.

Hermione made her way over to the lone trunk that was in the classroom and opened it before pulling out a jar – one that suspiciously looked like the one that Remus had slammed on the windowsill.

Hermione moved over to the middle of the room and unscrewed the jar and tipped it to the side.

A small water beetle came out of the jar and just stood there while Hermione placed the jar to one side and glared at the beetle.

“Okay Rita – we know it is you. Give yourself up,” Hermione ordered only to let out a sigh of frustration when Rita refused and pulled out her wand and pointed it at the beetle, only for the beetle to scuttle away and it morphed up till Rita Skeeter was standing in front of Hermione with a haughty expression. Harry and Hermione had talked about asking Rita to write about what happened on the Graveyard but decided to keep back – they wanted to see what the Ministry would do first.

“Nice to see you Rita,” Hermione said with a satisfied smirk on her face.

She and Harry had spent time together after Hermione had told Harry that she had some suspicions that Rita was an animagus. Both of them had talked about what kind of animagus she could be till Hermione remembered the water beetle that she had seen at two scenes and they had both approached Remus about their suspicions.

Remus had thought about it and agreed that it had made sense and agreed to help them out. He had spotted a water beetle on the windowsill of the Hospital wing and trapped it in a jar before it could escape.

“What do you want?” Rita snipped and Hermione arched an eyebrow.

“A life of peace with Harry – but then again, that’s not gonna happen for a while,” Hermione informed the woman sarcastically. “Not after your lies.”

"I was only telling the truth," Rita informed Hermione with a tilt of her nose and Hermione snorted.

"Telling everyone that I was using a love potion on Harry when we got together because we wanted to be together? Telling everyone that I was stringing Viktor Krum and Harry along when I had already chosen Harry? Do you really want me to continue?" Hermione raged.

Rita couldn't help but take a step back out of fear when she saw Hermione's eyes dark eyes turning blue. Harry just rested his back on the wall and crossed his arms as he watched his girlfriend scare the life out of the reporter.

Harry couldn't help the smirk that crossed his face seeing dangerous Hermione was looking, and was glad to see that the old Hermione was back. She had been worried about him nearly all year – it was a relief to see that Hermione was beginning to get back to her old self.

"You wouldn't be allowed to do anything to me," Rita informed Hermione, not confidently as she watched Hermione's features darken as she glared at the reporter.

"That's what you think," Hermione asked as she took a step closer to Rita, enjoying the way Rita took another step back out of fear. "I could go straight to the Newspapers and inform them how you are getting your information – I'm pretty sure that they won't be too happy."

"What do you want?" Rita asked.

"I want you to stop writing for a year – see if we can't break that bad habit of yours," Hermione ordered her. "Maybe then you can find something that is the truth."

"And just how are you going to make sure that I will do that?" Rita asked and Harry sighed, he was getting annoyed with the circle and decided to make it clear.

"Fine, I'll make it clear," Harry informed the witch. "Tell one more lie – we'll hunt you down and make you regret it." The room lit up with an unseen fire. "Trust me when I say you don't want to cross us – being

an unregistered animagus isn't really a good thing, last I heard, the penalty for being one was pretty severe."

With that, Harry wrapped his arm around Hermione's waist and both of them left the classroom and Rita Skeeter alone so they could meet up with the others and go home.

They reached the train station. Ron went ahead to grab an empty carriage for them while Mia, Harry and Hermione met up with Draco.

"Here we are," Mia stated as they came to a stop near the train. "The end of another year."

"Never uneventful," Draco stated as he handed his trunk to the prefect, who took it and the rest of the trunks. They knew it was risky, talking to each other, but Draco didn't care. He was planning on showing his real path later in the year anyway.

"Are you staying at Harry and Mia's house this summer?" Hermione asked from where she was tucked under Harry's arm and got a nod in reply.

"Yep, for most of it. Dad still doesn't know about me being on your side so I'm safe at the moment," he explained.

"Thank God for that," Mia stated, "beside, I have a feeling that when he does realise, it will such a shock to him, he'll die of a heart-attack on the spot," Mia stated as she climbed into the train and Draco looked at Harry and Hermione.

"Did she..." he trailed off when he got nods in reply and rolled his eyes before stepping into the train. "She's more bloodthirsty than the rest of us," he muttered, leaving Hermione looking after them with amused look and Harry shook his head.

"And he is just figuring this out?" Harry whispered to Hermione. Hermione just gave him a tender smile before she reached up and kissed Harry's cheek and stepped into the train with Harry following her.

Harry looked around and saw that Fred and George were making their way over to a compartment and turned to Hermione once more.

"I gotta go and talk to someone – get us a compartment and I'll meet you there," he told her. Hermione nodded as she reached up and kissed him before she followed Ron and Mia as Harry hurried over to the twins.

"Fred, George, can I speak to you for a minute?" Harry called out and the twins looked back at Harry before waiting for everyone to leave and Fred closed the door.

"Yeah?" George asked.

"Know how you two have wanted to set up your own joke shop?" Harry asked and the twins nodded, curious. "Here," Harry handed them the sack of the triwizarding championship money.

"You're crazy," Fred stated as he tried to hand the money back, but Harry shook his head.

"No, listen to me," Harry told them and they both looked at him, serious. "Voldemort is back – all the money in the world isn't going to stop him from coming after me but you guys – you can do something good with the money. Just because darkness is rising – it doesn't mean that you can't create some light of laughter in the midst of it."

"Harry..." George started.

"Create laughter – remind everyone that just because there are dark times, the good times are still there waiting to be revealed – only you two can do it," Harry told them and they both nodded, finally accepting the money and Harry gave a smile of relief.

"One more thing," they both looked at him. "Don't tell anyone that I gave you the money – especially Hermione – I actually like having her as my girlfriend," Harry told them and they cracked identical grins before they saluted and Harry walked out of the compartment.

Harry went looking for Hermione and the others and smiled when he saw Ron was sitting upright on the couch with his head pressed

against the window, sleeping. Mia was curled up next to him with her head resting on his shoulder as she slept as well.

Hermione was sitting next to the window with Crookshanks sitting on her lap as she alternated between reading the book that were in her hands and looking outside at the scenery.

Hermione turned her head when she felt someone watching her and felt a smile cross her face when she saw Harry standing in the doorway.

“Hey,” she whispered, mindful of the two sleeping partners. “What took you so long?” she asked as Harry moved closer to her.

Harry sat down next to her and she shifted her body so her head was resting on his shoulder and she placed the book on the small table.

“I just need to talk to the twins about something,” Harry whispered back to her and she nodded as Harry kissed her on the forehead and both of them stared out of the window, relishing in the silence.

The train came to a shuddering stop, awakening Mia and Ron from their sleep. Mia stood up, stretched, and rubbed her eyes before she looked around and noticed that they were at the train station.

“Yay, home!” Mia cheered quietly, getting a smile from Harry and Hermione as Mia grabbed her stuff and made her way out of the compartment with Ron following her, stumbling slightly as he tried to wake himself up.

Harry and Hermione followed them and they all stepped off the train and looked around to see that most of the students were like Ron before they grabbed their trunks and phased through the wall to get onto the other side.

Harry and Hermione passed through the wall, they found themselves standing on the muggle side of the train station, Hermione spotted her parents standing next to the car, talking to each other as she and Harry moved closer to the car park.

Hermione came to a stop and looked at Harry.

"I want you to meet my parents," Hermione told him and Harry looked at her.

"I've met your parents," Harry reminded her and Hermione rolled her eyes.

"Not as my boyfriend," she shot back and he stopped in his tracks and looked at her. Hermione looked at him too, now with cautious.

"What?" Harry asked and Hermione shrugged.

"We kissed, I'm just assuming that we're boyfriend and girlfriend," she whispered and Harry shook his head.

"Is that what you want?" Harry asked and Hermione looked at him before smiling gently.

"I don't usually go around kissing my friends," she teased him and he laughed slightly. "Are you okay about it?" Harry nodded.

"Yeah, I just never, you know, thought about it that way," he explained. Hermione just gave him a smile before kissing him, gently, on the lips before linking their hands together and led him over to meet her parents.

"Mum! Dad!" Hermione greeted with a bright smile as she moved over to her parents. Stuart and Jane Granger turned and smiled when they saw their daughter with Harry in tow.

"Hello sweetheart," Jane greeted as she bent down and kissed Hermione's cheek before pulling her into a hug. She let Hermione go and turned to face Harry. "Hello Harry," she drew Harry into a hug before kissing his cheek and let him go. "I'm so sorry to hear what you've been through this year, Hermione explained everything to us." Harry nodded as Stuart let his daughter go after enveloping her in a hug.

"Yes, though I'm not very happy about this 'Voldie'?" he looked at his daughter, who smiled up at her father. "As Mia tends to call him, coming back and telling his servant to kill a friend of yours. I have never heard of a more cowardly thing in my life."

"I'm sure that Mia will agree with you," Harry told the man, who nodded.

"Is there something you want to tell us?" Jane asked as she watched her daughter and her best male friend, as Hermione often referred to Harry as, fidget slightly. Hermione blushed before she reached out and linked hands with Harry.

"Harry and I are together, together," Hermione told them, staring at them both with a determined glint in her eyes. Stuart placed his fist over his mouth under the pretence he was thinking while in reality he was hiding his smile.

Stuart and Jane had spent most of the years talking about the budding romance between Harry and Hermione because all of Hermione's letters seemed to contain more of Harry than anyone or anything else. They had wondered how long before the children would finally get together. Stuart knew that he shouldn't be happy and a part of him wasn't, that part wanted to keep Hermione as his little girl but at the same time, he remembered how Hermione glowed whenever someone mentioned Harry or when she talked about Harry and knew that Harry would protect her.

Mia had made that pretty obvious by telling them a lot of things that Hermione seemed to have neglected to mention in her letters.

Jane couldn't stop the smiling that was spreading on her face. She saw how happy Harry could make Hermione and Harry was everything she had envisioned for Hermione's future partner.

"Oh, congratulations sweetie!" Jane told them as she swept them up in a hard hug.

"Thanks mum," Hermione said while Harry looked at Stuart.

"You just take care of Hermione," Stuart told Harry and got a firm nod in return. "So, I guess this mean we won't be seeing you much this summer then?" Stuart asked. Hermione seemed to deflate at his question.

“Actually, we were wondering if you would like to come up to our house this summer?” Harry jumped in, causing Hermione and her parents to stare at him in a shock.

“Excuse me?” Stuart asked hopefully.

“We couldn’t have you up in summer before our second year because you had all those dentist conventions. We couldn’t have you up in the summer before our third year because Sirius was still under cover. We couldn’t have you up last summer because we already had plans but I was wondering if you were free this summer, would you like to come up? This way you get to see more of your daughter and I’m pretty sure that Mr. Weasley would like to get to know you as he and his sons are coming up to our house over the summer,” Harry shot Hermione an amused grin.

Hermione couldn’t help but smile back at Harry before she turned to face her parents.

“Please say you can come up, Sirius would love to be able to talk to you face to face properly this time and everyone would be able to explain the wizarding world way better than I ever could,” Hermione pleaded them before giving them the puppy dog eyes.

“Well, we don’t have anything on this summer,” Jane stated as she and her husband shared a look.

“So, yes, we would love to come up,” Stuart finished and got a delighted squeal and hug from his daughter.

“Great – you can call Uncle Sirius tonight and make the plans,” Harry told them before turning to Hermione. “You still have the phone number?” Hermione nodded. “Good – I’ll call you tonight.”

“Great,” Hermione told him and Harry leaned in and kissed her softly on the lips, mindful of her parents that were watching before he pulled away and stroked her cheek with his thumb before giving her a lop-sided smile and pushed his cart over to where Mia was saying goodbye to Ron.

Hermione just watched with a dreamy smile as Harry walked away before she turned to her parents and Stuart smiled.

“Uh oh, looks like someone is lost,” Stuart teased, causing his daughter to blush as she ducked into the car as Stuart placed the trunks and stuff into the car and closed the boot as he and his wife made their way into the car and backed the car out of the car park, intending to go home.

After Harry had said his goodbyes to the Weasleys, he and Mia made their way over to the car and Mia slipped into the front seat while Harry sat in the back seat and nodded to Draco when he saw the blonde male sitting on the other side of car, Sirius had placed a charm on Draco that prevented him from being recognised by anyone.

Harry and Mia buckled their seatbelts and Sirius backed the car out of the car park and moved out onto the busy road so he could take the kids home to rest up and start new training.

“So Voldemort is back, what do you think he’ll do now?” Mia asked and Sirius looked at her from the corner of his eyes and at the boys through the rear review mirror.

“He’ll probably lay low for the times begin and I have a feeling that he will try and get a hold of the prophecy,” Sirius told them.

“Thanks to Harry coming straight back after Voldemort came back, that means Voldie is pissed,” Draco told them.

“Let’s just hope that he won’t start the war straight away,” Mia muttered and Sirius shook his head.

“I don’t think he will,” Sirius told them. “He’ll need time to regain his forces. Most of his old Death Eaters are either dead or betrayed him so he won’t be too welcoming with them, so he’ll be recruiting new ones, not to mention he’ll probably raid Azkaban to get his most loyal followers out.”

“I’ll keep a look out for them when we go back to school, a bunch of them will be in Slytherin and I’m pretty sure there’s a few in Hufflepuff. The Ravenclaw is a little more confusing – some of the purebloods

whose family joined Voldemort seems to hate Voldemort but I can't tell if it just a cover, I'm pretty sure there might be some in Gryffindor – Peter was one and he betrayed you guys,” Draco told them.

“Well, once Voldemort has revealed himself – the lines will be drawn and we'll know where everyone stands to a point but we'll need to watch out for spies,” Harry told them and got nods of agreement in return as they all turned to stare out of their windows as Sirius drove the car in silence.

The End/TBC

Okay – I'm sure that you all noticed that I didn't say when the fifth book will be out and there is a reason for that.

I had a look at my diary and it turns out that if I was to keep posting one a week – this would last another two years – as much as I love this story – posting for another two years will drive me up the wall.

So my betas and I will be working together to get my series completed so that way I can start updating twice a week and you won't have to wait because I haven't finished a chapter in time and sent it to my beta too late.

Second – there are too many ideas coming in for the series so that means I need to take a complete step back from it and plan each section and as most of you were worried about Mia being at the front line – I've decided I need to drop her into the background in the later stories – to those who love Mia, don't worry – there will be plenty of her but there are other major plots in the next sections of the series causing me to having to divide all my time up.

Third – I'm back at college and have been since the end of August – we have been heading into the practical and I ALREADY have assessments piling up (I've only been there for a short time!) – I'm going all over the place.

This will take a while for me to get completed – it looks like it might be after Christmas when I finally get it all settled and a majority of it completed but we'll see.

But don't fear – I have a new story coming out which I have been working on.

Matters of the Hearts: Hermione Granger is a love doctor who helps people find love. What happens when a misunderstanding threatens everything she holds dear? Does a mysterious black haired man hold the answers?